

Cursillo Talent Concert

Sunday, January 20th, 2008, St. Claire's Parish, 1947 Central Ave,
Colonie, NY 12205, Concert to begin at 6 PM. Refreshments afterwards!



Sr. Betsy Van Deusen
Spiritual Director

We Are All "Called to Be Church"

We in the Diocese of Albany have the privilege of offering our insights and thoughts and concerns and fears to the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Office and our Bishop, Howard Hubbard. It is fair to say that people in other dioceses have not had the trust and confidence placed in them that has been placed in us.

With that trust and confidence also comes responsibility to be faithful to the process, to trust that a plan will emerge and the knowledge that there will be lots of shifting and changing and GROWTH. I often have long discussions with God about being just as happy to have growth happen without the corresponding pain and change and upheaval. Usually growth comes with those.

We in the Cursillo community are in a unique and dare I say, privileged place for this process because we experience the support and love of a larger diocesan community and not just that of the local parish or the local planning group. We recognize that wherever we are we have the opportunity to influence that environment with and for Christ. We know that our strength comes from the tripod - holiness, formation and evangelization (piety, study, action) and that when we are balanced in our lives, then the Spirit of God can work more effectively to influence and shape our environments for the good.

As this process continues, decisions to close buildings, merge parishes, consolidate ministries are likely to happen. We will be impacted because as the Body of Christ in the world and especially in this part of the world, called the Albany Diocese, we are connected and we will be changed and shifted and yes, we will grow. The very

best and most faithful people that we are need to fully embrace this process and walk with our brothers and sisters when hard things are decided.

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God." Phil 1: 9-11

Christ is still counting on you and so is the Church of Albany!

DeColores

Babe Asks....

Hi my name is Sara Sponsor and I have with me a Babe Chick. Like many new Cursillistas she has many questions. I am sure that there are many others of you who have them as well. So I will be answering her and your questions in the Little Light.

Today's Question

Babe Chick:

Sara I just made my weekend and I am still a little confused on what Palanca is all about, can you help?

Sara:

What is Palanca? What is a Palanca letter? A Palanca letter is one that is sent to the candidates and team, informing them of the prayers and sacrifices that you are offering to God on their behalf. A letter may be sent explaining what type of Palanca is being offered, but the letter is NOT the Palanca. The actual Palanca is the action - **intercessory prayer, sacrifice, or works of mercy**, and it can be done without writing a letter.

Babe Chick:

So, I understand, Palanca is not the written message, it is an action that goes with it!

Sara:

That's right, the action of Palanca broadens your faith journey, and allows the recipient to understand the sacrifice of the community at large and on the weekend to participate in the faith of the world-wide Cursillo Community.

If you have any questions about Cursillo that you would like answered, just send them to:

Babe Asks
c/o The Little Light
16 Terrel Way
Gansevoort, NY 12831
mclaw@nycap.rr.com



*Do you,
have something to share
with the Community?*

We are looking for articles, reflections, short stories...words of encouragement. If you would like to share with your sisters and brothers please contact me, Kit Lawrence (518) 693-6867 or mclaw@nycap.rr.com.

**Cursillo Women’s Weekend 51
Team**

Rev. Frank O’Connor	Spiritual Director
Sr. Betsy Van Deusen	Spiritual Director
Dcn. Frank Berning	Spiritual Director
Shirley Neet	Rectora

Ellen Bradt
Antoinette Callahan
Mary Ellen Crucetti
Nancy Cullings
Jessica Farley



Kim Gray
Sandra Haas
Pat Higgins
Barbara Honors
Patricia Johnson
Kit Lawrence
Marcia Lupe
Sandra Miller
Jane Noblett
Mary Grace Renda
Marion Rosenthal
Sharon Thouin

Please keep the team in your prayers as they prepare for the upcoming weekend!

**Joe Thouin
Lay Director**

“Cursillo Isn’t What It Used To Be.”

I hear that expression often. “Remember the good old days: When the Service Team/Outside Team actually cooked the meals, when we had 80 people in an Ultreya, and when we had two men’s weekends and two women’s weekends a year? Remember the good old days?”

I remember when St Joseph’s Parish in Cohoes had four priests, when the Mass was transitioned from Latin to English, when we started being Lectors for the first time. I remember when they first trained Eucharistic ministers and parishioners switched lines to receive Jesus from the

priest. I remember when there was a priest at each meeting of the laity. There were far fewer ministries to belong to then. Most of them were led by a religious.

Times **have** changed. In my parish last year there were 44 sponsored ministries listed for parishioners to join. That number continues to increase as parishioners take upon themselves the task of initiating Gospel work, listening to their inner voice, volunteering to serve, to be, as Mother Teresa described, the hands and feet of Jesus on earth. No longer is a priest at every meeting. How could he be? Today he probably not only doesn’t have other priests to help share his responsibilities, he probably has the responsibility to share his time among more than just one parish! Parish service is very important. It’s a necessity in the absence of the religious. What effect does that have on Cursillo? It has tremendous effect!

Thirty-four years ago when Cursillo was initiated in the Albany Diocese, my parish didn’t have 44+ ministries to choose from. My small parish still had two priests. Our school had nearly a full complement of sisters who taught K through 8. When I went to high school religious teachers still outnumbered lay teachers. **There weren’t a lot of opportunities in the local parish for the laity, except perhaps the cafeteria. Cursillo provided a structure outside the local parish that was sanctioned by the Church.** Within Cursillo men and **women** found a structure that enabled them to practice their faith fervently and climb an informal ladder of success. A man or **woman** could go on a weekend as a candidate, then, perhaps within a year or two be asked to be on a team. After serving on the support team, that person might be asked to be the Coordinator of the Support Team. Another year that person might be asked to perform a Marian Devotion, followed in subsequent years by a Friday Rollo, a Saturday Rollo, and a Sunday Rollo. At this point a man or a **woman** would be considered for Rector or Rectora. Cursillo was not only a structure outside the local parish, sanctioned by the Church, but it had equal opportunity for both men and **women. It flourished.**

Cursillo also provided a governing body for those wanting more than an annual weekend experience. This governing body was, and is, the School of Leaders and Secretariat from which all good things are supposed to flow. ☺ According to the Cursillo Leaders Manual, all Rollistas should come from the School of Leaders. The School is the beginning. The Cursillista is trained here. The Rollista is trained here. The Weekend Teams are made here.

What **has** changed? State laws around food preparation and handling govern how much or how little the Support Team can do on a weekend. We are a litigious society, and therefore institutions have liability for their patrons. The Second Vatican Council called all the baptized into “full, active participation” in the life of the Church. Men and women now have many ministry options to choose from, in their endeavor to serve and bring the Gospel message to their environments. Think about it. If Cursillo were to be your primary Apostolate, how many of your other ministries would have to be curtailed? You might belong to Marriage Encounter, REC, RCIA, Bereavement Committee, Altar Rosary Society, St. Vincent De Paul Society, Food Pantry, Youth Ministry, Teen Ministry, Marriage Prep, Hospital Visits, Visits to Shut-Ins, Hospice, Meals on Wheels, Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Baptism Preparation and the list goes on. Then there are Diocesan Ministries like Catholic Charities, Circles of Mercy, and Formation for Ministry Program etc. In other words there is no shortage of ministries in which to get yourself involved.

I don’t believe Cursillo is in direct competition with other ministries. I do believe Cursillo is in direct competition with people’s valuable time. Two important advantages to the Cursillo candidate however, are: Learning a **method** they can use for the rest of their lives to be closer to Our Lord Jesus, and **three full days out of their busy, over-stimulated environments**, to listen to God’s call. Are they now where God wants them to be? Are they traveling the path God wants them to be traveling? I have heard many people at the Diocese say that they are no longer active Cursillistas, but

they still use the method, and probably wouldn't be in their current Diocesan role, if it weren't for their Cursillo experience. That says a lot. That's important. It's important for us to continue the weekends in order to help the candidates serve God where he wants them to serve. It's important to come together with fellow Christians as prayer partners, confirming one another's faith and take responsibility for living out our own faith as well. It's important to come together as a believing community on days that we have no 'obligation' but affirming one another by the sharing of a little piece of our faith journey. Cursillo has and still offers these opportunities in abundance.

Where **are** the 'Good 'old Days'? I invite you to go on a Cursillo weekend if you haven't already. If you have I invite you to rejoin or reform a small group. I invite you to go back to the Ultreya in your area. I invite you to re-read His book. We win in the end. The good old days, may *be just* ahead.

God Bless and DeColores
Joe

Shirley Neet
Rectora—Weekend 51

***“Rectora or Not Rectora,
“That is the question”***

My name is Shirley Neet and I am the Rectora for the upcoming Women's Cursillo Weekend #51.

I have exciting news. The next women's weekend is March 27th – 30th, 2008. The team has been chosen and we have anxiously begun our team meetings. I say exciting and anxiously looking forward now, but that isn't how I always felt. Let me back track a little.

I made Weekend #39. It was a very emotional experience for me. I remember saying at the closing, I felt like the disciples in the upper room following the Resurrection. I was happy, excited and eager to be a part of this new community I had found. I wasn't alone anymore; I had a new family. Did I really comprehend the whole experience? I think not, because I

thought the Fourth Day was Sunday. It wasn't until much later in my Cursillo journey that I realized it was the rest of my life; a continuous journey in my faith formation and one that would challenge me above and beyond anything I ever thought.

The Rectora on my weekend was Maggie Kane. She made sure we stayed on task. There was a lot to be covered and we had a schedule to keep. At times, I even felt a little afraid of her. I was always an introvert, so to think I would ever be in that position never even crossed my mind. Over the years, I was invited to be on other teams. Being a “Martha”, I was very happy being on the service/support team. Anything I could do to help behind the scenes, I was willing to do. Because I was afraid to speak in front of people, I found it difficult to give my first talk; but I was being stretched to speak, to reach beyond my comfort zone. Even today, I still find I am nervous about speaking in front of people. I think that is good because I know I cannot do it without God's help.

Since Weekend #39, there have been many Rectoras. Women who were chosen and had the ability to take a group of women and form them into a loving and faith filled community to be of service to the candidates. I admired and looked up to them for guidance and direction. Certainly this was not something I would ever be asked to do or be capable of doing.

When I was asked to be the next Rectora in training, I felt inadequate, incapable, unworthy and frightened to death to take on that role. The only reason why I said yes was because I believed they had no one else to ask. It was like I was Jonah making all kinds of excuses why I could not do it; but in the end I reluctantly said yes.

I cannot tell you the anxiety I went through. It was a very long time before I came to accept that it was not Cursillo asking me to be Rectora, but God. He had chosen me as unworthy and incapable as I felt. You know how you give things to God and then take them back? Well that is what I did with this invitation. I would say, “O.K. God”, I will do it, but then when my fear would take over I would say, "I can't do it". This went on for a very long time. Finally,

inside I accepted the invitation with the understanding that He would walk with me every step of the way. A friend of mine told me “God does not call the qualified; He qualifies those He calls”. I really like that phrase. It takes the burden off my shoulders and puts it on God. I am merely His instrument, His servant, His witness. I tell Him, ‘This is your weekend not mine’. So you bring the team you want me to lead and the candidates you want us to serve. I will do whatever you ask. This does not mean that I don't get scared from time to time thinking I have taken on more than I can handle, but it is at those times that I remind myself that it is not my weekend, it is His.

So our journey has just begun. Please keep all of us, the team, and the candidates who will be participating in Women's Cursillo Weekend #51 in your prayers. Pray that the Holy Spirit will open our hearts and minds and give us the words to say with faith and conviction so we may guide the candidates to where God is calling them.

Father, You are the potter, we are the clay. Mold us and fashion us into the people you desire us to be so we may serve You faithfully and lovingly.

DeColores,
Shirley

Soup and Stations



February 15, 2008, has been set for our Lenten Soup and Stations, hosted by Father Vince Ciotoli and *scheduled for St. Teresa of Avila*

Church, 435 New Scotland Ave., Albany, NY. Please come and bring your favorite Soup. Set up will be at 6:30 P.M., followed by Stations at 7:00 P.M., followed by Soup Supper at 7:30 P.M.

Celebrate Cursillo Talent

January 20, 2008, has been set for "Celebrate Cursillo Talent" at St. Clare's Church. Be thinking of selections that you would like to present at the occasion. Maureen Hayes will be coordinating the event. Admission will be canned goods and dry grocery for the St. Clare's Food Pantry. So far we have Maureen Hayes, Keith Reynolds, Kit Lawrence, Barb Honors a new rendition of Tony Orlando and Dawns, Mike Melanson, Hugh Cameron, and others. All are invited, bring a friend, make a friend....



Carl Rosenthal
Web-Master

"Be fervent in spirit" *Romans 12:11*

Since I last wrote we have gone from the beauty of spring, to the warmth of summer, to autumn's colorful array of changing leaves, and now into winter's barren bleakness, a symbol of what often happens to our spirits. We live a spiritual rhythm of ups and downs, fullness and barrenness, blossom and decay. The downs pave the way for the ups, the barrenness creates the possibility of refilling, and the times of decay fertilize the new blossoms in our life.



Sr. Kathryn James Hermes, F.S.P. wrote in the Living Faith and I quote. "A few months ago I came across this definition of prayer in Teresa of Avila – God Alone Suffices: To pray is to think of Jesus while loving him. It was as if a match had been struck within me, and those simple words ignited my brittle spirit into an ardent fire that burned

away bad habits and replaced them with a yearning for holiness. The Holy Spirit ignites these spiritual fires within us that make us long for more. St Paul knew this because the Spirit had transformed his ways of thinking, acting and loving, making him a new creature in Christ. So keep your eyes open. The Spirit will use something in your everyday, ordinary experience to ignite your spirit and set your heart aflame."

I'm sure we can all associate with the ups and downs in life. How do we ignite our spiritual flame in the Spirit? As we go through the winter's barren bleakness, let us pray to the Holy Spirit that he will stir up the ashes and re-light our inner fire to get us from the downs to the ups.

I again encourage you to check out our web site often for new information and updated Calendar of Events so you can keep up with what's going on in Cursillo. Also, put The Albany Diocesan Cursillo Web Page on your favorites list so you can access us faster. You can find us at: www.cursillo.org/albany . This is your Web Page so send me comments or suggestions for our site. You can e-mail me at albancursilloweb@yahoo.com .

DeColores

Carl Rosenthal

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE BENEDICT XVI
FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE
WORLD DAY OF PEACE
1 JANUARY 2008

**THE HUMAN FAMILY, A
COMMUNITY OF PEACE**

At the beginning of a New Year, I wish to send my fervent good wishes for peace, together with a heartfelt message of hope to men and women throughout the world. I do so by offering for our common reflection the theme which I have placed at the beginning of this message. It is one which I consider particularly important: *the human family, a community of peace*. The first form of communion between persons is that born of the love of a man and a woman who decide to enter a stable union in order to build together *a new family*. But the peoples of the earth, too, are called to build relationships of solidarity and cooperation among themselves, as befits members of the one *human family*: "All peoples"—as the Second Vatican Council declared—"are one community and have one origin, because God caused the whole human race to dwell on the face of the earth (cf. *Acts* 17:26); they also have one final end, God"

This is a portion of Pope Benedict's message. You can read the entire message on the Vatican website. <http://www.vatican.va>

Women's Weekend



**It is scheduled!
March 27th thru
30th, 2008.**

**To be held at the
Dominican Spiritual
and Conference Center in
Niskayuna, NY.**

**The cost of the weekend is \$170.
Applications are available on the
Albany Cursillo website for down-
loading.**

**Please keep the candidates, sponsors
and team in prayer!**

Monthly Ultreya Locations & Contacts

2nd Friday	Contact	Phone	3rd Friday	Contact	Phone
Ravenna, NY	Ellen Bradt	768-2757	Glens Falls, NY	Wil & Marie Trombley	793-3901
Scotia-Glenville	Harrilyn Beehner	581-0742	Ilion, New York	Lucille Kinney	315-894-8385
Troy, NY	Chuck & Rosalie Adams	273-9017			

Elaine Granato
School of Leaders

Recently I was forced out of my apartment by a broken washing machine hose. A great quantity of water came under my apartment door from the hallway and completely covered the kitchen floor. It had started to go into the living room as well so the carpeting got soaked. By the time I woke up it was several inches deep. I went to work that morning convinced that the owners' shop-vac and a few minutes time were all that was needed to get everything back to normal again. Was I ever wrong! It took a restoration company and 4 days to clean up the mess. There were huge fans and cords everywhere when I returned home from work. The noise and heat were unbelievable. I realized I could not stay in my apartment that night so I gathered some belongings together and started to drive away. Where would I go? Everyone needs at least one friend who will take you in at 5:30, give you dinner, and let you stay the night as if it happened every day of the week. I am fortunate enough to know such people, but that is not the case for many of our brothers and sisters.

What an awful thing it must be to be really homeless. With our national focus on acquiring more and more possessions, some of our brothers and sisters do not even have a decent place to sleep at night or any idea where their next meal is coming from. They do not have resources to fall back on or a car to get around. What is God calling us to do about this? Ministering to their immediate needs is important of course, but dealing with the root causes of the situation is called for as well. Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers...

Maybe we are being asked to write to our government leaders or maybe we are being challenged to look at the way we use our resources and the choices we make on a daily basis. Christ is counting on us. I do not think I'll be the same after this experience. I remember those first moments of panic when I knew I could not sleep in my own bed. At least I knew this was only temporary and there would be a happy ending. I will not be satisfied until that is true for all of us.

DeColores!
Elaine Granato

*A Reflection from the
past...*

Pope JP II gives his Blessing



In 1980, Pope John Paul II, addressing the first National Italian Ultreya in Rome said, "Your movement, which recently celebrated its thirtieth anniversary, devotes itself to drawing forth from Christians a commitment to live

lives consistent with their faith whether individually or as a community - and to bring this ferment to the environments where you live."

"You have discovered anew the explosive truth of the evangelical message: God, Father of all, comes to us as we encounter him in Jesus Christ to reunite us through the grace of the Spirit in one family which is the Church."

"In her, we are truly able to experience even now the love which will be the inexhaustible fountain of eternal joy in heaven. Here then is the synthesis of all of Christianity. This is the news that all human hearts hope for without realizing it. Therefore dedicate yourselves more and more to being tireless apostles in your environments."

"My apostolic blessing goes with you as a pledge of this divine grace which enables you to live forever."

*A Reflection from the
present...*



Pope Benedict XVI

For insight into how the Pope views Cursillo, we can look to a 1985 book then Cardinal Ratzinger wrote with the journalist Vittorio Messori: Ratzinger

Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church. Here is a passage from pages 43-44 of that book: "What sounds full of

hope throughout the universal church - and this even in the midst of the crisis that the Church is going through in the Western world - is the upsurge of new movements that no one has planned and no one called into being, but that simply emerge of their own accord from the inner vitality of the faith. What is becoming apparent in them - albeit very faintly - is something very similar to a Pentecostal hour in the Church.

I am thinking for instance of the Charismatic Renewal movement, the Cursillo movement, the Focolarini, Communion and Liberation, and so on... I find it marvelous that the Spirit is once *more stronger than our programs and brings himself into play in an altogether different way than we had imagined.... It grows in silence. Our task - the task of the office-holders in the Church and of theologians - is to keep the door open to them, to prepare room for them...*

Kurt Lawrence
Pre-Cursillo

Alas, another Christmas has come and gone, now, we move towards Lent and the Easter season...WOW!

Take this time to reflect on the seasons, now maybe the time to Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ!

What better way to prepare for those 40 days of Lent. With the women's weekend set for March, and a men's weekend peering around the corner, you can make a difference in someone's journey with Jesus just by inviting them to Cursillo.

Many of you know the tripod as "Action", "Piety" and "Study"(..yes we are moving back to these definitions) take "action" and help someone else discover Cursillo.

I had the privilege to be in Columbus Ohio in November for the National Catholic Youth Conference. And there, I was introduced to 20,000 teens who are looking for something more. If there are young people looking for more, are the adults also looking? Be that friend!

God Bless & DeColores!