

# Cursillo Notes

www.natl-cursillo.org/bridgeport  
Diocese of Bridgeport, CT • November 2010

## Welcome to Cursillo: Pray for the 2010 Cursillistas

We sponsored four Cursillo Weekends in the past year. Please keep these new Cursillistas in your prayers as well as the team members who touched their faith lives in the name of Jesus Christ.

### **Frank Alvarez**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 63rd*

### **Thresia Avirappatt**

*St. Stephen, Trumbull; Women's 66th*

### **Rick Belmonte**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 63rd*

### **Joseph Boland**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 62nd*

### **Maureen Burns**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Women's 66*

### **Tom Castellani**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 63rd*

### **Laurie Cingari**

*Our Lady Star of the Sea, Stamford;  
Women's 67th*

### **Kathy Cioffi**

*St. Jude, Monroe; Women's 66*

### **Michael Cioffi**

*St. Jude, Monroe; Men's 63rd*

### **Noel Cleary**

*Our Lady of Assumption, Fairfield; Men's  
62nd*

### **Carolyn Coulter**

*Church of the Epiphany, Cheshire;  
Women's 67th*

### **Al DeRubis**

*St. James, Stratford; Men's 63rd*

### **Rosemary Durkin**

*St. James, Stratford; Women's 66*

### **Mary Beth Falls**

*St. Mary, Bethel; Women's 67th*

### **Vincent Falotico**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 63rd*

### **Kevin Ferguson**

*St. Mary, Bethel; Men's 62nd*

### **Tony Fernandez**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 63rd*

### **Leo Flanagan, Jr.**

*St. Cecilia, Stamford; Men's 62nd*

### **Matt Guertin**

*St. Mary, Bethel; Men's 63rd*

### **Carolyn Houle**

*Women's 66th*

### **Cathy Kallberg**

*St. Mary, Bethel; Women's 67th*

### **Don Kallberg**

*St. Mary, Bethel; Men's 63rd*

### **Marie Karvelis**

*St. Patrick, Redding; Women's 66th*

### **Marcia Kelly**

*St. James, Stratford; Women's 66th*

### **Carole Kirk**

*St. Leo, Stamford; Women's 66th*

### **Susan Krushinsky**

*St. James, Stratford; Women's 66th*

### **Ed Lawlor**

*Sacred Heart, Georgetown; Men's 63rd*

### **Rich Middlebrook**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 63rd*

### **Joseph Miller**

*St. Joseph, Shelton; Men's 62nd*

### **Debbie Mitchell**

*St. Mary, Bethel; Women's 67th*

### **Bob Nelson**

*St. Mary, Bethel; Men's 63rd*

### **Tim O'Malley**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 62nd*

### **Adrienne Osso**

*St. Lawrence, Shelton; Women's 67th*

### **Ralph Passarelli**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 63rd*

### **Greg Pin**

*St. Edward the Confessor, New Fairfield;  
Men's 62nd*

### **Ziggy Rogowski**

*St. James, Stratford; Women's 67th*

### **Jeffrey Schorpp**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Men's 62nd*

### **Alex Sgoutas**

*St. Jerome, Norwalk; Men's 63rd*

### **Isabelle Silvestro**

*St. Mary, Ridgefield; Women's 66th*

### **Clark Tallman**

*St. Phillip, Norwalk; Men's 62nd*

### **Gil Terans**

*St. James, Stratford; Men's 62nd*

### **Al Vargas**

*St. Mary, Bethel; Men's 63rd*

### **Chris Vaum**

*Sacred Heart, Georgetown; Men's 62nd*

### **Jane Vaum**

*Sacred Heart, Georgetown; Women's 67th*

### **Tony Wallace**

*St. Mary, Bethel; Men's 63rd*

### **Theresia (Resi) Willumsen**

*Sacred Heart, Georgetown; Women's 66th*

### **Karen Zmijewski**

*St. Jude, Monroe; Women's 67th*

## Upcoming Weekends

*Please prayerfully consider  
who you'd like to invite  
then talk to potential  
candidates today.*

*This allows us to plan  
the weekends appropriately  
and the palanca can begin!*

**Men's 64th Weekend,  
June 23-26, 2011**

**Women's 67th Weekend,  
May 19-22, 2011**

# *A note from the* **The Lay Director**

Greetings to all and thank you for helping our Cursillo Movement continue to grow and develop.

We have been very blessed to have sponsors bring us a strong number of candidates to hold four Cursillo weekends this year. The Palanca for the weekend continues to be the lever of prayer and sacrifice that allows the Holy Spirit to infuse the weekend experience. Your contribution of meals and other food items nourish the candidates and the team which allows them to focus on the message of the weekend. The Closings of the Three Day weekend have been well attended, very spirited, and supportive of our new Cursillistas.

Our Ultreyas continue to grow in spirit and participation. It is time for all the small friendship groups to come together and encourage each other in our evangelizing efforts.

We now have three Ultreyas per month in our Diocese. We especially welcome all to our newly added Ultreya in Ridgefield which meets at St. Mary's Parish on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The Ultreya in Bridgport continues to meet at the Catholic Center on the first Tuesday of the month and the Ultreya in Bethel meets at St. Mary's Parish on the third Thursday of each month. In December and June, we celebrate a Central Ultreya with the entire Diocesan community at Our Lady of Fatima in Wilton on the first Tuesday of the month. Our Fourth Day Committee along with our Spiritual Director have done a great job of integrating the Spiritual wrap-up with the evening's witness talk. It is a beautiful method to help us persevere, to move onward!

Our School of Leaders continues to strengthen with a focus on Church and Cursillo teachings. The group meets the second Saturday of the month at Marian Heights in Monroe (see schedule pg. 6). This is a great opportunity to grow in Cursillo and help guide our Movement. Our Communications and Palanca programs reach out to the ever increasing community through e-mail notices, updated information on our website and Prayer Line. The Regional Service Team, a subset of National Cursillo, continues to serve the New York and New England region. They have conducted two Regional encounters this year which have been well represented by our Diocese. This team is very supportive of our Cursillo efforts in

the Diocese of Bridgeport.

All of the good things happening in our Movement are a result of much prayer and sacrifice. We need to continue to pray for our Cursillo Movement. Many thanks go to the Secretariat and Committee members, past and present, for their endless effort.

It is important to note that we are in the process of updating our Pastoral Plan which is used to help our community in moving forward with the mission of Cursillo. Each one of us has been blessed with the gift of Cursillo and it is our responsibility to fulfill its mission which is to journey together and evangelize our environments for Christ.

**God Bless.**

*Ray Bourdeau, Lay Director*



## *Cursillo Leadership Team* **Members of our Secretariat**

*Many thanks to Fr. Paul Merry,  
Mitch Marcinauskas and  
Pete Baumgartner for their service.*

*Lay Director*  
**Ray Bourdeau**

*Spiritual Director*  
**Fr. Ed McAuley**

*Prayer Chain/Palanca/Communications*  
([dodofloss@earthlink.net](mailto:dodofloss@earthlink.net))  
**Dolores Pace**

*Pre Cursillo (applications)*  
**Mary Beth Rauser**

*Three Day (weekend)*  
**Gina Donnarummo**

*Fourth Day (Ultreyas)*  
**Jim Bruno**

*School of Leaders*  
**Maureen Ciardello**

*Regional Representative*  
**Kathy Renzulli**

# *A few words from the* **Spiritual Director**

Our Community is now blessed with monthly ultreyas in Bridgeport, Bethel and Ridgefield. Since we all lead busy lives it's all the more important to attend Ultreya regularly. You're surrounded by the love of the community from the moment you arrive. You hear a Cursillista's witness which focuses on their piety, study and action, followed by echoes from Cursillistas about how the witness talk will help them in their evangelization, a "wrap" from a member of the clergy or a religious, and, of course, great refreshments. You leave refreshed and renewed to "move onward" in your Fourth Day.

It was a blessing to be named Spiritual Director to the English-speaking Cursillo of our diocese by Bishop Lori, and to be introduced to our Community in that capacity at our central Ultreya in Wilton in June. I'm indebted to my predecessor and brother priest, Father Paul Merry, for his assistance, support and friendship during this time of transition.

Fifteen men began their Cursillo journey on our Fall Men's weekend, and have jumped into their Fourth Days with great enthusiasm. It was a pleasure to serve as Spiritual Advisor on that weekend and to get to know these fine men. And we welcome the women

who just began their Cursillo journeys on our recent Women's weekend.

At the recent Clergy Convocation of all the priests of the diocese, Jesuit George Aschenbrenner offered this inspiring reflection on entering into God's love:

BE STILL.  
BE SILENT.  
ALONE.  
EMPTY.  
BEFORE YOUR GOD.  
SAY NOTHING.  
BE SILENT.  
LET YOUR GOD LOOK UPON YOU.  
THAT IS ALL.  
HE KNOWS.  
HE UNDERSTANDS.  
HE LOVES YOU WITH AN ENORMOUS LOVE.  
HE ONLY WANTS TO LOOK UPON YOU WITH  
HIS LOVE.  
BE QUIET.  
BE STILL.  
LET YOUR GOD LOVE YOU!

**De Colores!**

*Father Ed McAuley, Spiritual Director*

## *Help Wanted: Parish Representatives*

We are looking for Parish Representatives. Your duties include:

- Contact your pastor and educate him on Cursillo if he is unfamiliar
- Ask your pastor if you can place pamphlets about Cursillo in your church (pamphlets are provided)
- Be the contact person for your parish in case any one inquires about Cursillo

Our goal is to have at least one representative in each of the parishes in our Diocese. As Cursillo grows in Fairfield County, so does our need to educate people on what Cursillo is. We have a link on the Diocesan web-site and there have been articles about us in the Fairfield County Catholic newspaper. Many people are inquiring about Cursillo, which is awesome!

Please note that this in no way takes away from our methods of sponsoring and knowing our candidates. You would simply act as a go-between and answer any questions that someone may have. Just because someone inquires about Cursillo, doesn't mean that they would attend the next weekend. Our mantra, "Make a friend, be a friend, and bring that friend to Christ", still applies. You will work with the other Cursillistas in your parish to provide the necessary support.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Mary Beth Rauser at 203-925-0710 or [mbrauser@hotmail.com](mailto:mbrauser@hotmail.com). Thank You!!

# What is it? *School of Leaders*

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By Maureen Ciardello

Have you ever wondered: What is School of Leaders? I have had people ask me and quite honestly I have had trouble giving an answer with which I feel satisfied. With some thought, reflection and prayer, this is the best way to explain School of Leaders.

First, I would like to break down that title “School of Leaders.” The word “**school**” may bring to mind scholarly images of teacher, student, learning and growing in knowledge. And it is that. But another image someone shared with me was that when they heard the word “school,” they thought of it as a “school of fish” -- conjuring up an image of traveling and being together with like-minded fish. I think for our purposes when we combine these two images, OUR school is a gathering of like-minded fish...coming together as “students” to learn and grow in our knowledge of our Catholic faith and of our Cursillo Movement. “School” in the Cursillo Movement is understood as a school where men and women seek ways of imitating Christ and becoming Christian leaders.

Now the word “**leader**.” Leader is an intimidating title for many. I was definitely intimidated by the word and DID NOT consider myself to be one! As a matter of fact I tend to be more on the quiet side and like to blend in the background. I am much more comfortable

letting others take charge and be “leaders.”

But what I have discovered is that a leader in the Catholic Christian term is not necessarily someone who takes control of things. On the contrary, as a lay person of the Church, a leader does not mean someone taking charge. The Christian leader is someone who, by his or her actions, in a simple way, helps promote the community. **Christian leadership is not ordering about but showing the way by witness and love.** I can easily do that...and am now more comfortable with looking at myself as a leader.

So in order for us to “hone” our Catholic Christian Leadership skills we gather at School of Leaders to grow into a mature faith, increasing our knowledge of Christ and his Church. We do this by studying Church teachings, in the form of the Catechism, Encyclicals and Church Documents. We also study our Cursillo Movement and the teachings given to us by Eduardo Bonnin, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit and was given the Cursillo method to live and share.

But most of all, we do not do this alone...we do this gathering together as a community with our brothers and sisters in Christ...our fellow Cursillistas! Yes, as a School of Fish! I can be a leader because I have others who are leading with me and because I have and am growing in the knowledge of Christ! And you can too!

## *Three Days of Joy = Fourth and Fifth Days, too*

By Gina Donnarummo

The purpose of the Three Day Cursillo weekend is to have a joyful Fourth Day Community—we are a Fourth Day Movement. “The Cursillos in Christianity is a method which enables living the true Christian life in the light of the baptismal commitment. It offers a way to facilitate an encounter with what is fundamental (the basics) of Christian living. It helps our candidates obtain or continue a conversion, and enables them to join their lives more fully to God, and to constantly move toward sanctity in communion with their brothers and sisters.”\*

We have all experienced joy on a Cursillo weekend—maybe on our weekend or on a weekend when we were part of the team. We know that joy comes from the Holy Spirit. Cursillo joy is “the realization that one is loved by God, and can love others as a consequence.” Christian joy is different from happi-

ness which comes from a joke or the latest comedy movie. Our Christian joy lives now—in our fourth day and in our fifth day when we will spend eternity with God our Father. Cursillo is “the joyful proclamation of being Christian.”

We need to spend time in prayer and offering real *palanca* for our brothers and sisters—not just on the three days of their Cursillo weekend, but for all times. There is always someone thinking and discerning about making a weekend. It may be our prayer when they will hear the “yes” from the Lord! “The Cursillo is planned and thought out to help the candidates awaken their hunger for God through a living experience of joy and grace of living in community and friendship.” Let us pray to our Mother Mary, Cause of our Joy, for our Cursillo Movement and for faithful men and women to join us in our Fourth Day.

*\*All quotes from the Leaders’ Manual.*

# *Our Fourth Day as Sponsors*

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*By Mary Beth Rauser,  
Pre-Cursillo Chairperson*

We all know that the Cursillo weekend we attended was not like any other retreat weekends we may have gone on. Our Cursillo experience does not end on Sunday evening after the closing when we get home. Our Cursillo journey is actually just beginning. This is what sets Cursillo apart from other retreats. The center of our Cursillo is our Fourth Day. And our Fourth Day is centered around our group reunions and Ultreyas.

Perhaps the most important aspect of our Cursillo journey is that of the support and care given by our sponsors. Sponsoring is an essential service provided for us in order to ensure the best possible experience as we journey from before our weekend to after our weekend in our Fourth Day. And here in our Diocese, we are doing an awesome job sponsoring our friends, bringing them closer to Christ, and in turn helping them to leaven their environments with the Gospel. But there is always room for improvement.

The process of sponsoring is not just asking anyone to go on a weekend. It is not as simple as that. There needs to be a plan in place. Sponsoring is not a haphazard circumstance. It should be a deliberate act to bring Jesus Christ into the world. Sponsoring someone for a Cursillo means preparing the candidate who can bring about change in his or her environments.

There are certain guidelines that we as sponsors must follow. I'd

like to mention a few here. The first is something we all heard on our weekends: to make a friend, be a friend, and bring that friend to Christ. And then, very importantly, we need to pray and discern whether Christ wants us to bring our friend to Cursillo. We need to truly know our candidates. Sounds

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**We need to have  
a Christ-centered,  
loving relationship  
with our candidate  
and plan to sustain  
that relationship  
well beyond  
the weekend.**

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simple, but it is critical to having successful Cursillo weekends and sustaining our Fourth Day.

Secondly, we need to have a Christ-centered, loving relationship with our candidate and plan to sustain that relationship well beyond the weekend. We should share key activities on the weekend – nothing is served in being secretive about the weekend and keeping things from our candidate. We should educate our candidates prior to the weekend as to their Fourth Day involvement, i.e. group reunion and Ultreya.

The last thing I'd like to mention is that we, as sponsors, should be living out our Fourth Day. We should be in a weekly group

reunion and attending Ultreya regularly. How can we expect our candidates to be prepared and successful in their Fourth Day, if we aren't living ours? It's almost like telling your child not to smoke as you hold a lit cigarette in your hand. We need to be good examples of living our Fourth Day so that our candidates can observe and learn from us.

When I attend a closing, it is always wonderful to see the new candidates witness and be so filled with enthusiasm after having had the opportunity to encounter self, Christ, and others on the Three Day weekend. But we know that this enthusiasm is sufficient only for the first step. We need to be motivated to take the second step: to freely use the method of perseverance by seeking a group of friends and making a commitment to share the Christian way of life together; thus fortifying the three encounters initiated on our Cursillo. By doing this, we will be that authentic witness of our own Fourth Day to our candidates and be more prepared and ready to sponsor them and part of their journey toward Christ.

Thank you for all the sponsoring you have done this past year. We had awesome weekends. But we must not waiver in our efforts to bring Christ into the world. Continue to pray for our Movement, the success of our weekends and most importantly our efforts in sponsoring and bringing our friends to Christ.

And remember, Christ is counting on us!

# Cursillo Calendar

January-June 2011

## Ultreya:

### Team Up to Witness and Facilitate

Make a resolution in 2011 to witness or facilitate at Ultreya. Our Ultreya coordinators and talk “work-shoppers” assist both the witness speaker and the facilitator. Present an Ultreya as part of your 2010 evangelization plans. Contact our coordinators...

#### Ultreya Coordinators

Bridgeport: Carol Twiggs, [caroltwiggs@msn.com](mailto:caroltwiggs@msn.com),  
Tom Restivo, [thomasrestivo@aol.com](mailto:thomasrestivo@aol.com)  
Bethel: Ginny and Pat Gorman, Mary Guertin  
Ridgefield: Jura Owczarzak  
Central: Tom Restivo, [thomasrestivo@aol.com](mailto:thomasrestivo@aol.com)

### Bethel Ultreya

*at St. Mary Parish Center, Bethel at 7:30pm,  
third Thursday of the month*

January 20 • February 17 • March 17  
April 14 • May 19

### Bridgeport Ultreya

*at the Catholic Center, Bridgeport at 7:00pm,  
first Tuesday of the month*

January 4 • February 1 • March 1  
April 5 • May 3

### Ridgefield Ultreya

*at St. Mary's Parish,  
fourth Wednesday of each month.*

January 26 • February 23 • March 23  
April 27 • May 25

### Central Ultreya

*at Our Lady of Fatima, Wilton, at 7:30pm,  
first Tuesday of June and Dec.*

December 7, 2010 • June 7, 2011

## School of Leaders

*at the Nazareth Spiritual Life Center,  
1428 Monroe Turnpike (Rte. 111), Monroe  
9:30-11:30am*

### See article on page 4.

January 8 • February 12 • March 12  
April 9 • May 14 • June 11

## Regional and National Encounters

*Regional Encounter is April 1-3, 2011  
in Framingham, MA*

*National Encounter is July 28-31  
in San Antonio, Texas*

The regional service team support the dioceses in a particular region. Region I is comprised of New England and New York. There are currently four people on the service team: Jim Santos from New York, George Nason from Maine, Dan Daigler from Vermont and Kathy Renzulli from Connecticut. The team acts as a resource and support to help the dioceses with their movements. This can take the form of materials, linkages, workshops or simply helping to talk through an issue. The Regional and National Encounters are an opportunity to interact with Cursillistas from other dioceses and hear additional talks on various aspects of Cursillo. Please call for additional information, Kathy Renzulli, 888-8615

## Visit our web sites!

[www.natl-cursillo.org/bridgeport](http://www.natl-cursillo.org/bridgeport)

- Calendar and contacts have been updated.
- Cursillo applications are available online.
- Watch for additional updates and changes.

[www.natl-cursillo.org](http://www.natl-cursillo.org)

### On the National web site you will find:

Information and registration for the National Encounter  
Cursillo Literature • National News Letters  
School of Leaders Articles • Cursillo Gift Shop  
Link to Lighthouse Catholic Media  
USA Cursillo links to local web sites