

Cursillo Notes

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CURSILLISTAS: WOMEN'S 70TH

Pamela Arsenault,
St. Rose, Newtown

Gerri Cortese,
St. Leo, Stamford

Janet Cote,
St. Joseph, Shelton

Carol Delaney,
St. Patrick, Bedford NY

Marie Downey,
St. Leo, Stamford

Christine Frost,
St. Francis Xavier, New Milford

Esther Giordano,
St. Catherine of Sienna,
Greenwich

Ann Hogan,
St. Leo, Stamford

Denise Marcil,
St. Leo, Stamford

Jennifer Mihok,
St. Cecilia, Stamford

Cyndi Morosky,
St. Mary, Bethel

Nancy Pimentel,
St. Leo, Stamford

Victoria Rossi,
St. Joseph, Shelton

Donna Schmidt,
St. Ann, Bridgeport

Janet Wrabel,
St. Stephen, Trumbull

Come and See: Friendship comes first

By Father Ed McAuley,
Spiritual Advisor

“Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ.”

As Cursillistas, there's no other way that we bring others to Christ than through friendship. And after prayerful discernment, we may feel nudged by the Holy Spirit to bring a friend to Cursillo. We see a good example of “bringing a friend to Christ” in John's Gospel when Andrew tells his brother, Simon: “We have found the Messiah.” Andrew then brings his brother to Jesus.

The next day, Philip answers his call to follow Jesus, then finds Nathaniel and tells him: “We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law, and also the prophets. Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth.” Nathaniel reacts: “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Philip responds: “Come and see.”

What excellent models of bringing a friend to Christ through friendship! Our Movement promotes and fosters friendship by means of the “three encounters” – self, God and others. But as

Father David Smith reminds us in *Study of the Charism*:

“The accompaniment in friendship does not end with the Three Day Cursillo. Otherwise, it would constitute proof that the friendship was superficial....Using “friendships” in order to increase the “body count” of those whom one sponsors would undermine and devalue the quality of the friendship. We need to remember that. ‘Microwave friendships’ are seriously deficient.”

Father Smith adds: ***Friendship is a journey which must evolve naturally. There is no timetable for friendship –it may take years to “bear fruit.”***

Our Movement is not about “the Weekend,” but our Fourth Day. We're a Fourth Day Movement. Our main perseverance tools in Fourth Day are Group Reunion and Ultreya. And so as a sponsor your responsibility doesn't end with getting your candidate on a Weekend. In fact, when you sign your Sponsor form you say: ***I commit myself to supporting my candidate's Fourth Day life for a minimum of six months following his or her Cursillo weekend.***

A good reminder that Cursillo sponsorship is serious business! After you've “spoken to God” about sponsoring a friend on a Weekend, Father Smith suggests that you consider these two questions:

- 1) Does this person currently have the capacity to discover and live the three encounters?
- 2) Does this person have the capacity for evangelical friendship in order to “infect” others with the friendship to be discovered in the three encounters?

May God bless your discernment and our Movement. De Colores!



Upcoming events:

**Cursillo
Summer Picnic**
Sunday, August 11

**Cursillo day of
study/reflection**
*will be announced in
the fall.*

Step 1: Pre-Cursillo

By Joe Kotulich

Pre-Cursillo is the first phase of the Cursillo Movement. "Make a friend, be a friend, and bring that friend to Christ." - that is our guideline, our purpose and our mission. First and foremost, we are to witness to others what we have come to discover: that God loves us.

It is through true friendship that you invite a candidate for a Cursillo weekend. That is how you become a sponsor. To

sponsor a candidate is a testimony of your commitment to the Cursillo Movement. You have to "live" the Cursillo method. This includes weekly group reunions and monthly Ultreyas .

There are many opportunities to form your sponsorship: attend a sponsor workshop, read literature on the National website (www.cursillo.org), become a parish representative, share your Cursillo experience with a friend, etc.

Cursillo, for me, has led me to a place closer to Christ than I ever thought I could be. It has helped me redefine my goals as a husband, father, son, and friend. It helped me put the important things in life into perspective: God first, family second, and work third. The rest is really unimportant.

It is with this commitment that I live my life. I offer to those around me, the same opportunity to experience what I have experienced through Cursillo. De Colores!

Step 2: Our Three Day Weekend

We are reminded that the three encounters in the three-day Cursillo weekend are: encounter with self, encounter with Christ, and encounter with others. After, hopefully a good Pre-Cursillo from your sponsor, you were well-prepared to enter into the three day weekend to make these encounters. We were asked on the Thursday night of our weekends to give our enthusiasm, devotion, and a spirit of love. The Cursillo gives us an opportunity to stop and face ourselves...a movie we have made about ourselves. Would we want to share that movie with others? Are we proud of that movie? What were the scenes like from each stage of your life? As we listen to rollos from laypeople, clergy

and religious, attend Mass each day, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, participate in adoration, pray the rosary together, how did your movie change throughout the weekend? Did you find yourself wanting to bring that joy of Christ and love of God you were encountering (maybe for the first time) to others?

These are the questions we asked ourselves and these should still be the same questions we are asking today 2, 5, 20 years after our three-day weekend. The three-day weekend was a three-day weekend and we are now in our Fourth Day. We have to take what we have learned and bring it to others. We are apostles and our whole life should be an apostolate of sharing God's love. We

read: "in our action we employ the best means to reach others with God's love--friendship." And, "these three encounters should be intensified in the Post-Cursillo [through personal contact at the closings, School of Leaders, Ultreyas and grouping]. By living this method learned on the three-day weekend, we establish new relationships with ourselves, God and others so that we can leaven our environments with the Gospel. So take your movie, the life you want to live, and share God's love in your Fourth Day with your everyday environments. De colores!

(Adapted from an article on the National Cursillo website, under the School of Leaders section.)

Fundamental Ideas #88 teaches us that "the Cursillo Movement is not something, but someone. It is not a thing; rather, it is an organized reality, alive and active, a human reality constituted by the gathering together of men and women who, after having made the Cursillo weekend, adopt the mentality and fundamental principles of the Cursillo Movement."

A note from the outgoing Lay Director

By Ray Bourdeau

With the completion of my term as Lay Director, I want to thank the entire Cursillo Community for the honor and privilege of serving in this capacity. It has been a prayer-filled, humbling and rewarding experience for me. The blessings have been abundant. Most rewarding were my encounters with so many Cursillistas. It was such a blessing to work with and be in contact with so many people from within our Diocese and from the Regional and National Cursillo groups.

For me personally, the most notable impact from my role as Lay Director has been on my Study. I made my Three Day Weekend in April 1996. On the Weekend, my heart opened up to God and I truly let Him into my life.

As many of you know, I love Cursillo and its components of Group Reunion and Ultreya. I did, however, always struggle when people asked me 'What is Cursillo?' I was able to talk about elements of Cursillo but I had a hard time describing Cursillo from an overall perspective. I found myself in this same position while discerning the request to serve as Lay Director. I questioned my qualifications because I still could not satisfactorily answer 'What is Cursillo?'

Within three

months from the beginning of my term, my Study began its rise. National and Regional Cursillo representatives planned a visit to our Diocese to review our Movement. To be prepared, I read everything Cursillo I could get my hands on. During their visit, the reps, one of whom spent time and prayer with Eduardo Bonnin, the founder of Cursillo, stayed overnight at our home. We talked Cursillo and listened to his experience with Eduardo. Within five months, the National Cursillo Executive Director's wife and her daughter were planning to visit a college in Connecticut and needed a place to stay so they called me. Diane and I made new friends and hosted them for a couple days.

Within 15 months, our Diocese hosted the first *Cursillo de Cursillos* in Region 1 (New England and New York) with over 60 attendees. We had two National and three Regional representatives in our presence, including the National Cursillo Executive Director. We were blessed with much Cursillo discussion with people who experienced time and prayer with Eduardo Bonnin.

So, why do I bring up these encounters? They were the answers to my prayers. These encounters provided me with the Study to be able to better know and feel Cursillo. I would like to very simply

summarize what I learned:

What is the essence of Cursillo? It is the Good News that "God loves me." What is the purpose of Cursillo? It is so that all men and all women in the world know that "God loves them." What is the methodology of Cursillo? Friendship; create a world of friends in all our environments.

Now I was starting to get it. This made sense, it was understandable and it was doable. At the 2011 National Conference in Texas, Diane and I observed that some Dioceses were planning to use the 'Study of the Charism' as the basis for their School of Leaders programs. Fortunately, in September 2011, our Diocese did the same.

Our Secretariat and School of Leaders committee, along with our dedicated religious and clergy members, have helped to create a very vibrant learning environment which is critical to the success of our Movement in our Diocese. Through my Study, I have come to realize that we are called to continually learn, develop, grow and strengthen in our Movement just as we are to do in our relationship with God.

I continually revel in the parallels that exist in my walk with Cursillo and my walk with God. I have come to realize, know and feel that they are one and the same!

De Colores!

Step 3:

Our Fourth Day

ULTREYAS

Through our commitment to Cursillo we will be able to continue to share the Good News of Christ with others in our square meter and Sponsor others for future weekends. Please attend an Ultreya...

Bridgeport Ultreya:

The first Monday of the month at St. James Parish Center, lower level, Community Room at 7pm. Eileen Masaryk Coordinator eileenmasaryk@yahoo.com

Bethel Ultreya:

The third Thursday of the month 7:30pm in the Hall of St. Mary, Bethel, Mary Guertin, Coordinator, mguertin@wpsir.com

Central Ultreya:

June 4 and Dec. 3 2013, 7:30pm. Our Lady of Fatima, Wilton, Jeanette Kovacs, Coordinator jkovacs@snet.net

We have a new Secretariat.

Outgoing committee chairs are: Jim Bruno (Fourth Day), Maureen Ciardiello (School of Leaders), Gina Donnarummo (Three Day), Dolores Pace (Sec./Communications), Mary Beth Rauser (Pre-Cursillo), Dave Whitmore (Treasurer), and Ray Bourdeau, our Lay Director.

We thank all of them for their service to our Movement, and **we welcome our new committee chairs!** They are:

Gina Donnarummo, Lay Director, ginad1224@yahoo.com
Joe Kotulich, Pre-Cursillo, JosephKotulich@gmail.com
Mario Ciardiello, Three Day, mario.ciardiello@gmail.com
Jeanette Kovacs, Fourth Day, JKovacs@snet.net
Therese Wales, School of Leaders, theresewales@gmail.com
Patty Quirk, Sec./Communications, pquirk61@gmail.com
Mary Beth Rauser, Treasurer, mbrauser@hotmail.com

A study of “My Spiritual Testament”

School of Leaders has spent the past year studying the origins of our movement using the study of the charism. We have been renewed in our efforts to more fully live our Fourth Day by learning from the founders of our movement more about what living our Fourth Day actually means.

In March, we commemorated Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI’s pontificate through a study about his life, and also participated in a lively discussion about the election of our new pope. Then in April, we began studying Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI’s first encyclical, “Deus Caritas Est” (“God is Love”). This study has been teaching us more about what it means to love our neighbor and be true friends to those around us. We will conclude this study in September. Please join us even if you can only come

for one month of the study; the encyclical is nicely divided up into sections, so it is not necessary to have read the entire encyclical in order to benefit from the section we are currently studying.

Beginning in November, we will be studying *My Spiritual Testament*, Eduardo Bonnin’s account of his life and the spiritual journey that led to his inspiration by the Holy Spirit to found the Cursillo movement. Sr. Lorraine will be leading us in a very special session, in which she will set the stage for this study by laying the historical background that will better help us to understand Eduardo Bonnin’s life. There will be relatively little reading involved in this study, and there is a lot to learn!

As we have been studying the charism of Cursillo and the encyclical “God is Love,” the theme

that has emerged over and over again is friendship. With this in mind, we are hoping to kick off a study in 2014 focused on the stories in the Bible that teach us about the friendships between the men and women in the Scriptures. We hope you will join us as we discover how, like Eduardo, we, through our authentic friendships, can light the candle that only we can light to illuminate the paths of our friends and lead them into closer friendship with Christ. Like Eduardo, each of us has been placed in a time and place in history designed for an impact that only we can make.

We are going to learn what it means to participate in true friendships, because we can only impact our environments if we build authentic relationships with the people who cross our paths every day.

Resources for prayer and sponsorship

www.natl-cursillo.org/Bridgeport

This is your connection to our Cursillo community. Sponsorship forms, information for potential candidates, background information, palanca and more.

bptpalanca@yahoo.com

Know someone who would benefit from the prayers of our community? Send your prayer requests to Barbara Findley at this mailbox. Would you like to join us in prayer? Send Barbara a note to the address above.

pquirk61@gmail.com

Sign up for Cursillo email announcements by sending an email to Patty Quirk.

Why I love to go to National Cursillo Encounters...

By Dolores Pace

I've been to Encounters in Washington D.C., San Bernardino CA, San Antonio, TX and most recently Cincinnati, OH. They are held usually on a weekend at the end of July, at Catholic Universities, with attendance ranging from 450 to 650 Cursillistas from all over the U.S. Because the events are held at Universities, rooms are in the dorms. Sometimes in the old traditional dorm rooms, but mostly in suite type settings. A far cry from my college days with communal bathrooms and showers. As with all Cursillo events, the food is great, served cafeteria style.

Upon checking in you are given an ID badge, a nice tote bag and an agenda printed in three languages- English, Spanish and Vietnamese, biographies of the speakers and a song book. Talks are given in either banquet rooms or gyms, with participants sitting at round tables. This year translations in all three languages were available through headphones.

So why did I go through the logistics with you? Well they are relevant. I'll explain why. I'm a dental hygienist and to keep my license, I have to take Continuing Ed. Credits every year. I consider these encounters along with Ultreyas and grouping CEU's on my Faith journey.

I'll take you through the past weekend at Xavier University in Cincinnati. Twelve of us from the diocese attended. We all had different flights, which were all delayed due to bad weather and our baggage wouldn't arrive with us. Things were a little tense and I remembered something I had learned at a National witness talk -- when we look in the mirror what does Christ want us to see? Not, as I thought, a good person or a Christian, but a reflection of His face... we must be Christ-like. So, I asked, what would Jesus do in this situation? I kindly thanked the baggage clerk for helping us and then, while I was standing there, our luggage was in a small room to the right. I said a "Thank you, God" out loud and the evangelization begins.

I take vacation time at work to attend these Encounters and usually combine it with a tour of the surrounding area, visiting family or friends who happen to live in that area. It also happens to be the weekend near my birthday. So my evangelizing continues. I explain to my family and friends that I cannot think of a better place to be on my birthday than with a group of people who have God in their heart. After all, shouldn't our first encounter be with ourselves and that leads to

encounters with other human beings who surround us? I come out of the weekends with a sense of renewal and peace that is recognizable by those I am with afterwards.

Back to the weekend itself. We start each day with morning prayers, Mass every day is scheduled at different times, and there are at least three presentations a day that last about 30 minutes. After the talk there is group discussion time and we make it a point to sit with different people at different tables each day. One day I sat with a group of Spanish speaking people, another day with a Vietnamese group. It was interesting to share with them and get a different perspective on the talks. Their struggles with keeping the Cursillo community active is similar wherever they are from. Many are trying to get the young people involved -- their adult children and grandchildren.

Attending National Cursillo Encounters is very special to me. I always come away with a vast amount of new knowledge that helps me evangelize and lead my life as an authentic Christian. So think seriously about attending.

Let us continue on our paths to friendship together and with God who loves us, in our hearts.

De Colores!

John 15:15

"No longer do I call you servants...but I have called you friends."

Register today for the next National Cursillo Encounter:

July 25-28, 2013

Hofstra University

Hempstead, NY

www.natl-cursillo.org/encounter

Cursillo of Fairfield County
219 D Windgate Circle
Monroe CT 06468

MAKE A FRIEND,
BE A FRIEND,
BRING A FRIEND TO CHRIST.

CURSILLO, BRIDGEPORT DIOCESE