



Cursillo Courier

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Archdiocese of Newark, NJ
Cursillo Movement

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Dates to Remember in 2017–2018:

- ◆ Jan 19 Ultreya
- ◆ Feb 16 School of Leaders
- ◆ Mar 9 Ultreya
- ◆ May 3-6 Men’s W/E
- ◆ May 18 Ultreya
- ◆ May 31-June 3 Women’s W/E

Some Missions are Worth Repeating

By Anne Ventola, Lay Director

When I was nine years old we had a shoebox Christmas Drive at school. We were told we needed to get a shoebox and fill it with things that a child our age might like. Then bring it to school so we can give it to a child who was less fortunate than us.

I went home and told my mom that we NEEDED TO DO THIS RIGHT AWAY! I was VERY SERIOUS about it. I was on a mission and Mom was all in!! We found a shoebox and we went and bought things like barrettes, stickers, gloves, socks, lip gloss. All things a young nine year old girl in 1980 might like!

The shoebox tradition continued at my school and each year our shoebox got bigger and bigger. The next year we got a sneaker box, the year after that we got a boot box. You get my drift.

By time I was in high school Mom was thinking of a way to continue our “Shoebox Christmas”. She reached out to her friend Sister Jacinta. Jacinta runs St Joseph Social Services in Elizabeth, NJ. Sister Jacinta feeds around 800 people at her soup kitchen and tries and gives “Christmas” to so many families in need.

Mom “adopted “ a family for Christmas and we kids and some of Mom and Dad’s family AND their Cursillo Family chipped in and we gave this family a Christmas. We wrapped every gift and we put them in bags (like Santa’s sack). People slowly over the years started to hear about what we were doing and they would give mom money for our cause.

37 years later our “Shoebox Christmas” is alive and strong. It has grown so large, and we get thousands



of dollars in donations. We adopt 2 families (usually single mothers) and we buy clothes, shoes, coats, boots, toys.....everything you think a child might like on Christmas morning.

I like to say “The Elves” shop and wrap all the packages and “Santa” delivers them to Sister Jacinta in Elizabeth but in reality “The Elves” are me, Mom and my best friend Nancy and “Santa” is REALLY my brother John!

I tell you this story not to brag or be boastful.....I tell you this story to show how Cursillo changed my family’s life. My Mom and Dad brought the principles of the Cursillo method into every aspect of our lives. We were taught from such a young age about the importance of a Christian Community. We were taught about being people of Action. They didn’t use those words....sometimes they didn’t use words at all. We followed their example. We bloomed where we were planted.

As this Christmas season begins I hope we all remember what we learned on our Cursillo Weekend.

I hope we choose our Ideal. What is it we want to do? Do we want to give a Christmas to someone in need....maybe we can take a name of one of the many Giving Tree’s at our local parishes.

DO we want to feed the hungry? Maybe we can donate food to our very own Sister Linda Klaiss who is ALWAYS looking for food for her food pantry.

Cursillo teaches us to choose our Ideal. Don’t make it too lofty...make it something attainable. Then with the methods we

Annie Ventola, cont'd.

learned on our own weekend go out and make a difference. Evangelize our Environment. Become the change we wish to see in the world.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Holy New Year and May the Christ Child, whose birth we celebrate, fill your

hearts with joy, peace and mercy and may we continue to be Christmas to each other all year round.

Love and always

DeColores

Annie

Reflections in Advent

By Paul Carris, Asst. Lay Director

I hope all our Cursillistas and their families had a happy and blessed Thanksgiving. As a church, we next turn to Advent and the coming of Christ. The challenge we are presented with is: how do we look to the coming of Christ during Advent.

I found myself reflecting on this question from a somewhat strange starting point. These days many engaged couples ask why two Catholics must be married in a church, as opposed to some beautiful venue a couple has in mind, or right near the reception hall for convenience. Their rationale is that God is everywhere, not just a church. To be honest, I've struggled to find what I would call a convincing reason for that "rule" when I sought answers within our church community. I would attempt to explain that it is the sacramental nature of a Catholic marriage, but found that response alone fell short of helping couples to understand why.

Church is where we receive our sacraments and commit our lives to God, especially in Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage and Holy Orders. We prepare and bring ourselves to the Lord in humility to receive those sacraments. We seek out God in his church and among his community, to bless us and let him know that he is our God. It is a public statement of

who we are as Catholics. When a couple joining as one choose to do so in a church, they are boldly saying to the world, "We have come to you, O Lord, we are seeking you out; because as the incarnate God of Love, we want you to be a part of our lives together."



That message – that way of thinking – is how we should approach Advent. Not just "waiting" for the Lord to come to us, but seeking Him out in our preparations for his coming into the world as one of us. That preparation can take many forms:

Any good relationship requires listening. Listening to God is a great place to start our preparation for his coming. We listen to the word of God by at-

tending Mass, reading the Bible and lives of the saints, or in the silence of Eucharistic Adoration.

We talk to God in prayer. That includes keeping him in our thoughts and hearts always and making time just for him.

We can develop our appreciation for God by reflecting on the beauty of nature with which he has surrounded us, or reflect on where he has helped us in our lives and then give him thanks for these gifts.

We can seek cleansing of our sins through the sacrament of Reconciliation. This will empty ourselves of those obstacles to listening and talking to God.

In the words of Pope Francis: "Christmas is an encounter with Jesus. God has always sought out his people, led them, looked after them, and promised to be always close to them."

May we all use our Advent time preparing well by seeking the God who seeks us.

Blessings, Cursillistas,
Deacon Paul

Inside Story of Recent Cursillo Weekends

I would like to share my thoughts with you about the Men's 192nd weekend. For those that attended the closing, one would have to agree the witnessing of the candidates showed how alive and present the Holy Spirit was. He was absolutely running up and down the hallway of the Casa all weekend. There are two main reasons why this weekend showed the great Glory of our Heavenly Father.

First, the team that was truly called by the Spirit did their due diligence and



nity: please take note and use these new babe chicks in upcoming weekends. They are alive and on fire with the love of Jesus in their hearts. This is exactly what we need to get the next generation involved and in keeping the movement alive and healthy for decades to come.

Lastly, our team was humbled again by the outpouring of blessings that has been poured down from heaven upon us. We are so blessed to have the Cursillo movement as the corner piece of our calling and apostolate. Please know we will always try to be faithful

servants in serving our community. Call upon us as you need. As always I remain—your brother in Christ!



was fully committed in their preparation and formation. Secondly, and in my opinion the most important reason for our success was due to the extraordinary prayers and palanca that was offered up and performed before the weekend. This proves time and time again the power of prayer.

Another observation was the presence of the youth of some of our candidates. Cursillo commu-



God called 15 babe-chicks to “The Fire of Your Love” Women’s 176th weekend held on October 26-29, 2017. As this theme, taken from the Prayer to the Holy Spirit, was repeated throughout the weekend at the start of each rollo, the flames were kindled, inviting and igniting His presence.

The Gospel reading on Thursday started the weekend out with Jesus’ words “I have come to set the earth

on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing”. The powerful winds and flash flooding did not keep our Cursillo brothers and sisters away from the Sunday closing, and were matched with our babe-chicks equally powerful witnessing.

Rector Betsy Mathesin and her Angel of a Sister-in-Law Teri Carr.



Erma Ventola's 4th Day Witness at Men's 192nd

I'd like to thank all of you for your beautiful witness. It is what spurs us on in this journey of life.

By now I'm sure you know my claim to fame is that I am Momma to these two fellas you spent the weekend with, Tony, John and two more Sam and Annie.

Perhaps there are some of you here sitting and experiencing different emotions. Some of you may have reached the summit of the mountain. Others may be half way there. And perhaps a few of you may just be ascending the mountain. Not to worry, for wherever you are is exactly where God wants you to be.

You are about to begin your 4th day, which is really the rest of your lives. The world you are about to enter once again is the same world you left on Thursday. Nothing has changed, if your boss gave you agita he'll still be the same. So will your wives and kids. The wars are still raging in the Middle East. There are still terrorist in our world, and I think you get my drift. But I assure you it will be different because you are now different and the world will be a little better off because of you.

You've heard some beautiful talks on this weekend, men very much like you guys, who have wives, kids, mortgages; and who are valiantly trying to live a life in grace.

Tony and his group reunion guys showed you a way to hold onto what you discovered on the weekend. Trust me when I say if you don't keep connected with your brothers and sisters in Christ the weekend will become nothing more than a pleasant memory.

Group reunion and Ultreya is one of the ways to keep what you've found. At closings, hearing the witnessing is what keeps the heart beating with a love of God. You might be called to be on team or to work on a service

team with men from your Parish. Accept it.

I sat where you are sitting, in a different venue, some 48 years ago. It was at the old Casa in Elizabeth. I can only speak for myself when I tell you it was life changing for me and my Sam. There was no marriage encounter, no Life in the Spirit, or Charismatic renewal. At that time there was pretty much only Cursillo. I guess you could say this ole gal not only took it to heart, but for the most part I've tried to live my life of grace, Piety, Study and Action. Now believe me when I say have I done it perfectly?? God no! Many a time I've fallen flat on my face but I can honestly say a brother or sister was there to pick me up. My group reunions have helped me tremendously. One size does not fit all – I repeat does not fit all. You might have to try a few before you find the right fit. Start with your sponsor. If you have trouble finding a group call Tony or John and I promise they'll help you to find where you belong.

I was fortunate to find groups that were the right fit for me but not at first. A spiritual Director is also a means for growing.

I am now involved in two groups. One, we meet on the last Wednesday of the month. Annie and I meet with two new babe chicks, and as new as they are they are teaching me in ways that has enhanced my growing.

The second group if you could call it that is every Tuesday morning when my son John and I meet, share some part of the card and usually a moment closest to Christ.

Fellas believe me that in itself is living proof with God all things are possible. My "Pecks Bad Boy", who had to try every conceivable aspect of life by living his motto; gimme see, from a toddler to well into his 20's.

Well it didn't or doesn't happen over-

night. My John Boy, who tried hard to skip mass as a kid, has now by the Grace of God become a Daily Communicant. In our lives Cursillo is the grace.

Your ways will certainly be different than anyone else's...but I assure you if your faithful in your trying to live a life of grace Our God and the Holy Spirit will indeed lead you. Hang in guys, do your best and God will do the rest.

Another small miracle that happened in my life after many years was when my Sam, an Operating Engineer of heavy equipment and a long shore man began to share our Lord in a special way every Sunday night. Once again that didn't happen overnight but it did happen and it made our marriage all the stronger and more beautiful. All goals that happen over this ole gal's lifetime.

There is a beautiful, true story about Charles Laughton (a famous English stage actor) who was called up to speak at a Communion breakfast many years ago.

When he got up to speak he chose to speak about the 23rd Psalm and was received with great applause. In the audience was another speaker, a deaf Priest who didn't hear what Mr. Laughton spoke about. The deaf Priest also spoke about the 23rd Psalm. The people in the audience did not initially know the Priest was deaf. The men in charge of the Communion breakfast apologized to Mr. Laughton and said they did not know the Priest was going to speak about the 23rd Psalm. Mr. Laughton, most gracious as ever said, "Please no apologies necessary, I recited the 23rd Psalm...but the Priest knows the Shepherd and prayed it."

You dear brothers have also met the Shepherd on this weekend. Work with Him, talk with Him and your lives will be all the better. Doesn't mean you won't have your share of

crosses, but it does mean to believe and claim His promise when He ascended back to the Father. He told us and His Apostles;

"I will send you a helper and I am with you always, even to the end of time."

Max Lucado once said; "When you're really down and seems as though you're losing your faith from excessive worry, get with loving friends, they'll lead you back to God." That is why your Group Reunion is so important. Life happens and we need support and love of other humans in the times of stress.



Beauty and friendship scatter the seed of hope in us. Again, your way will be completely different than anyone else's. No two ways are alike. I've tried to share some of the ways my 4th day has brought me.

48 years ago at best, Sam and I were Sunday Catholics. What I knew about my faith or Christ you could fit onto the head of a pin. I was so blest because my sponsor, Fr. Joe became my mentor and teacher. Today, RCIA requires a year of preparation. I went to Fr. Joe for 3 years every Saturday. I still remember the first book he gave me to study; "A Path through Genesis." And boy did I learn. I was like a little sponge that couldn't absorb enough.

As I said again and again, Group Reunion, Spiritual Direction and Ultreya are all means of growing in Christ and living a life in grace.

I'd like to conclude with a meditation in which I'm certain many of you are familiar with. It's called "The touch of the Master Hand!"

Twos battered and scarred, and the auctioneer thought it hardly worth his while

to waste his time on the old violin, but he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bid, good people", he cried, "Who starts the bidding for me?"

"One dollar, one dollar, do I hear two?" "Two dollars, who makes it three?"

"Three dollars once, three dollars twice, going for three," But, No, from the room far back a gray bearded man came forward and picked up the bow.

Then wiping the dust from the old violin and tightening up the strings, he played a melody, pure and sweet as sweet as the angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer with a voice that was quiet and low, said "What now am I bid for this old violin?" As he held it aloft with its bow.

"One thousand, one thousand, do I hear two?" "Two thousand, who makes it three?"

"Three thousand once, three thousand twice, going and gone", said he.

The audience cheered, but some of them cried, "We just don't understand."

"What changed its' worth?" Swift came the reply. "The Touch of the Masters Hand."

"And many a man with life out of

tune all battered and bruised with hardship

Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd much like that old violin

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine, a game and he travels on.

He is going once, he is going twice, he is going and almost gone.

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd never can quite understand,

The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought by the Touch of the Masters' Hand.

My brothers all of you here on this weekend has been touched by the Master's Hand.

You also have a melody or a song, or an instrument within you. You and only you have been touched and only you must play your song. No one else can. The Lord designated only you. Let it be heard. Perhaps, it won't be at Carnegie Hall or Radio City Music Hall, but it must be heard by your family and your community.

And many a man with life out of tune, and battered and scarred with sin, is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd, much like the old violin. A "mess of pottage", a glass of wine; a game – and he travels on. "He is going" once, and "going twice, He's going and almost gone." But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd never can quite understand the work of a soul and the change that's wrought by the touch of the Master's hand.

DeColores!

Ultreya News...Ultreya News...Ultreya News...

Our Lady of the Valley, Orange was the setting of the Ultreya in September, offering a typical array of goodies of every persuasion: full calorie, low calorie, gluten-free, sugar-free and what ever else

these hosts could muster to please a particular palate.

The evening began with a greeting from Frank Capron. Anne O'Brien served as facilitator; Ernie Gonzalez regaled us with his witness to

his faith journey. Lisa Ally gave the lay response and the Spiritual response was delivered by Thomas Lipnicki. Closing prayer was delivered by Annette Eberle-Dortch.

St. Anastasia's, Teaneck hosted the Ultreya November 17 and provided a most joyful evening. Over 100 people attended, including many new Babe Chicks from the recent weekends.

Suzanne Rivera (photo) shared from her heart about her Fourth Day journey and told us to have faith...even if it's only the size of a mustard seed. Her witness moved many hearts. Next, Maureen Farley did the lay response and gave us a new perspective on several levels of forgiveness. Deacon Regan gave the Spiritual response and left us ready to tackle all our forgiveness projects!

Kathy Glowski served as MC and of course supervised the multitude of food offerings. Always a terrific job, Kathy and all of St. A's team.



Ultreyas are held around the Archdiocese on the 3rd Friday of every other month.

Next Ultreya is

January 19, 2018

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Oakland



Where to find all the Cursillo news that's fit to print? Applications? Photos of events? Times and locations of next Ultreyas?

mycursillo.com

School of Leaders Begins Anew

School of Leaders is off and running to a joyous start. The School's theme this year is taken from the book written by Pope Francis called "The Joy of the Gospel". Over fifty people attended our October session as we followed along in the chapters of this inspirational book. The book's first sentence, in essence, captures who we are as Cursillistas: "The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus." Pope Francis is inviting us to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least he said to openness to letting Jesus encounter us. Cursillo's purpose is to provide a foundation so that we may live what is fundamental for being Christian, love God and love our neighbor, experienced through the encounter with oneself, the encounter with Christ and others. Sr. Linda Klaiss led us through the first chapter of this book pointing out some of the beautiful passages writ-

ten by Pope Francis. One such passage stood out in my mind read as follows "There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter". Francis reminds us to have hope, the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

To adequately reflect the basis which gives identity and character to Cursillo, and to keep Cursillo true to itself, it is important to know and understand the methodology of the movement. This year's School of Leaders we will be presenting a series of lay talks to get a better understanding of the methodology or the nuts and bolts of Cursillo.

Joe and Lorraine Clark gave a brief history of the Cursillo Movement and talked about Pre Cursillo, the first of the three stages of the Cursillo.

Pre Cursillo consists of:

By Joe & Lorraine Clark

studying and selecting environments in need of evangelization;

searching out, selecting, and preparing candidates to live out together what is fundamental for being Christian;

helping individuals discover and fulfill their personal vocations by creating Christian core groups who will go out and leaven their environments with the Gospel.

Personal contact is the single most important technique of the Cursillo Movement. This technique is important in the Pre Cursillo stage when people are being selected and prepared for the movement. Such personal contact is the basis to the whole Cursillo method and is described in the Action/Evangelization talk of the weekend: **Make a Friend, Be a Friend and Bring a Friend to Christ through the Cursillo method.**

DeColores

SAVE THE DATE: November 28 – December 8, 2018

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

With Fr. John Gordon and Sr. Linda Klaiss

VISIT NAZARETH, THE SEA OF GALILEE, CANA, BETHLEHEM, JERUSALEM, MT. ZION, MT OF OLIVES, EMMAUS AND MORE

LAND AND AIR \$2995

More info to come

