



Cursillo Rainbow Connection

Volume 3 Issue 2

Lent, 2010

Archdiocese of
Newark, NJ
Cursillo Movement

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Dates to Remember in 2010:

- Apr 8-11 Men's Cursillo Weekend
- Apr 17 Day of Renewal
- June 18 Ultreya

Lay Director Pat Carr: Lenten Reflection

This has been a Lent made up of tumultuous weather. Early on, we had snow storms on top of snow storms. We've endured the "un-named" hurricane/nor'easter that caused tremendous grief in our area: downed branches, up-rooted trees, lost power, no heat, flooded basements. There have been some serious hardships for many throughout the tri-state area.

Is this unsettled weather pattern a metaphor for our Lenten journey? I guess that depends on how one's faith journey has been progressing throughout the course of the Lenten season. Lent, to me, can parallel my life journey. Lent, like life, has its ups and downs. At the beginning of Lent, I try to set a course of penitence and self-denial. I look at this course as spiritual strength training so that I'm better equipped to do battle at times of temptation.

As a mere mortal, though, I've been known to stumble. I've come to know that some days are a walk in the park and others have their share of storm clouds. Like the weather we've encountered recently, we can hit some pretty rough

patches. The good news is that I'm firm in the belief that God loves me through all my shortcomings. I take solace in the fact that I know that I am loved unconditionally. God's mercy and forgiveness knows no bounds.

As I write this I find myself at the end of a near-perfect day. Not only is it my patron saint's feast day - St. Patrick's Day - but it was about as perfect a weather day as one could imagine. I am thankful to be employed during this seemingly endless recession - I pray for our brothers and sisters currently facing employment difficulties. I didn't work today, though. No, I didn't take the day off. My office has been closed this week - it's still without power a full three days after the rains and winds have subsided. I did a spring clean-up outside and was thankful for the clear blue sky and relatively balmy temperature.

The weather today reminded me of the expression "Good things come to those who wait." For all intents and purposes today, March 17, was the first day of spring. Here's an interesting tidbit I gleaned from Wikipedia: "In the late

Middle Ages, as sermons began to be given in the vernacular instead of Latin, the English word *lent* was adopted. This word initially simply meant *spring* (as in German language *Lenz* and Dutch *lente*) and derives from the Germanic root for *long* because in the spring the days visibly lengthen."

So, my fellow Cursillistas, we take the good with the bad. As the song says, "The sun will come out tomorrow". Our difficult journey leading up to the Passion is followed by the celebration of the Resurrection, the cornerstone of our faith. I'm praying that each of your journeys is filled with not only the grace, the peace and the love of the Lord, but plenty of sunshine too!

Women's 161st Weekend Big Success

Congratulations to Candidates, Team and Service Team on the Women's 161st Weekend in the Archdiocese of Newark! A total of 18 Candidates answered the call March 11-14, 2010.

Rector Michelle Seymour, Sacred Heart, Rochelle Park, was assisted by Angel Joanne Gebbia, St. Thomas More, Fairfield. The Weekend unfolded on Thursday, March 11 and ran through Sunday, March 14 at our usual gathering place

"The Casa" at the Archdiocesan Youth Center in Kearny.

Michelle's Spiritual Directors included



Rector Michele Seymour and Angel Joanne Gebbia.

our Spiritual Advisor Fr. Tom Lipnicki, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Oakland, Fr. Paul Cannariato, pastor of St. Mary's, Closter and Newark-based Sister Linda Klaiss. Patty Landon, St. Aloysius, Caldwell, was the Music Minister. Michelle's Team was comprised of a mix of seasoned veterans and Team first-timers, including Robyn Padia, Kristen Guinane, Gail Artola, Yvonne Uber, Carolyn Messina, Monica McBrady, Annie Ventola, Betsy Mathisen and Angie Girardin.

Trisha Ferrara, OLPH, Oakland and Mary Bransfield, Sacred Heart, Rochelle Park, volunteered as Service Team Co-Chairs. Fr. Ernie Rush, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Bayonne celebrated the Sponsor's Mass. Janet Gyss and Roz Hughes were the Music Ministers for the Mass.

The Team had been in formation for the past 10 months putting this event together. Their hard work showed.

The Candidates did a beautiful job witnessing at the Closing as to how they were impacted by the Weekend experience. Many un-named Cursillistas performed palanca for the success of all involved.



Many, many thanks to all who volunteered to help out in ways big and small for this Women's 161st Weekend. Please know that these events could not happen without our Cursillistas stepping up to shoulder the various responsibilities necessary in mounting a Weekend. May all be richly blessed.

Cursillistas Gather at Ultreya on March 19

Cursillistas ranging from babe chicks to long-time veterans gathered for the March Ultreya to pray, sing, share and feed each other spiritually at the Casa in Kearny.

Hap Moran from Holy Spirit, Hackensack hosted the evening. Hap served as Rector for the Men's 176th Weekend last year. The gathering started with a prayer. Guitarists Mary Ellen Weiland and Pat Carr then lead the group in song. As is the custom for Ultreya, the assembled crowd broke into smaller units for Group Reunion.

John Rizzo, Corpus Christi, Hasbrouck Heights was the speaker. John gave a rousing witness as to how he is compelled to live out his Fourth Day directive of making friends, being a friend and bringing friends to Christ.

Fellow Corpus Christi Cursillista Mike Belej followed, reaffirming John's evangelization-themed message. Fr. Livinus, Blessed Sacrament / St. Charles, Newark offered a spiritual response to John's presentation.

The evening wrapped with a final group sing-along and closing prayer, then informal socializing that always takes place whenever Cursillistas meet. The Ultreya or "grouping of groups" serves as a way for a diverse cross-section of the Archdiocese of Newark Cursillo community to live the Cursillo message.

These meetings are held every other month all year long. Why not consider joining us for the next Ultreya gathering in May?



Pat Carr, John Rizzo, Hap Moran, Mike Belej, Fr. Livinius and Mary Ellen Weiland lead the evening.

Day of Renewal

Calling all Cursillistas: Our annual Day of Renewal is right around the corner! You have probably received prior email communications promoting this event which takes place on Saturday, April 17. Please consider joining us for a day of true Cursillo renewal. Our theme this year is “**You are the Voice of the Living God**”.

We are again gathering at Corpus Christi, Hasbrouck Heights. Many thanks are in order to Msgr. Lew Papera for once again offering his parish facility to us.

This is the one day of the year that all Archdiocese of Newark Cursillistas are asked to gather as one for a day of prayer, sharing, reflection, song and fellowship. We are honored to have three noted Cursillo speakers presenting that day: former Lay Director Kathy Glowski, St. Anastasia, Teaneck; multiple-time Team member and Blessed Sacrament,

Newark leader Harold Uche and long-time Cursillista Msgr. Paul Bochichio, pastor of Holy Family, Nutley.

The day starts at 8:30 a.m. with a light breakfast. Then Group Reunion, presentations, break for a delicious lunch, share insights and listen to a final presentation prior to the start of Mass. Msgr. Paul will be our celebrant. Live music will be on tap throughout the day, which concludes by 3:45 p.m.

We typically draw up to 150 Cursillistas for this event. Let's make this year our biggest year ever! The general consensus by the close of the day is that this is a very “Cursillo” experience. Words could never begin to explain that feeling. Many of you receiving this newsletter have never joined us for this event. Please consider doing so this year. We need one another to validate our Cursillo experience and to grow in the love of Christ through one another. There is strength in numbers - we would love for you to join us!

There is no set cost to attend this Day of Renewal. We ask that you

Please Join Us!

consider making a free-will offering to help us cover expenses. Please be sure to sign up via email to Joanne Rinkus (so we can get an accurate head-count for the food order) at decolores7@optonline.net. Or call her at 201 587-1631. Please register by April 7, just two weeks away. And remember, it is not a requirement to have made a Cursillo weekend to attend this event. Consider asking friends to come with you that have not yet made a Weekend.

I am looking forward to a wonderfully enriching day and I hope to see you there!

—Pat Carr,

Lay Director

All are Welcome

Upcoming Men's Weekend Looks for Candidates



Warden Rick Buff and Rector Ron Pepson get ready for the Men's 178th.

The Archdiocese of Newark is sponsoring the Men's 178th Weekend starting very soon on Thursday, April 8 through Sunday, April 11, 2010. What a beautiful time to make Cursillo - during Easter Week!

Many candidates are still needed to get this Weekend off the ground. As of this writing, a total of eight are signed up. We need roughly seven more to green-light this Weekend.

As is the case with all Cursillo Weekends, this one promises to be exceptional. Rector Ron Pepson and Warden Rick Buff have assembled a top-notch Team, including Spiritual Directors Fr. John Gordon, Fr. Don Hummel and Deacon John Wede-

meyer. Jim Garabo is the Music Minister. Team members include: Michael Giuliano, Lou Costello, Andrew Uche,

Horace Campbell, Steve Uber, George Streisel, Steve Taylor, Jim Clough and Ron Green. John Ventola and Carmen Distano are the Service Team Co-Chiefs.

Cursillistas are called to evangelize. What better way to do so than inviting a friend to make this upcoming Cursillo Weekend? Time is short, though. We need applications turned in within a week or so. Go to mycursillo.com, our “official” Archdiocese of Newark Cursillo website, to download applications. Christ is counting on you!

Sticking It Out

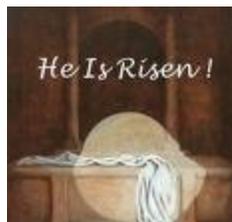
By Jean Kalembe

Easter Sunday lies just around the bend; Lenten practices of self denial will quickly fade from memory. The glory of that first Easter morning will be replayed in churches throughout the world - He is Risen! Mary Magdalene was the first to proclaim the victory; Mary called Apostola Apostolorum, Apostle to the Apostles! Mary of Magdala, first to recognize the resurrected Jesus. Was it an accident that Mary was the first or was it part of God's plan? Or maybe it was because she stuck around; women are like that you know. The others left, Peter and the other two, they went home. But Mary, she stayed. Determined to find out where they had taken the Lord, she was not about to leave until she found Him.

It was my first Easter following my Cursillo weekend. I was an official babe chick back in 1977 and group reunion was quickly becoming an important part of my life as were the women

with whom I grouped. Over the years that followed the words of John's Gospel, "Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'" took hold in my heart and an Easter tradition was born. I know it will never replace the Easter egg or the dinner ham, but it's a tradition nonetheless. Each holy week I create something that is symbolic of the Resurrection and on Easter morn, before the sun fully rises, I gather these "things" up, place them carefully in the car and leave them

at the doors of my sisters' homes. Each has a note attached: "He is Risen and Lives in Lorraine or Pat or Helga or Phyllis or Marilyn or Fran" depending on whose door I am at! It took a little while for them to figure out it



was me but even less time to get the message that these "things" were meant as symbols of their determination to recognize Jesus in themselves and others. These women, too, stick around; especially when you need someone to hold you up and keep you from falling. So Easter is just around the bend and I have to think about what I will leave at my sisters' doors, but there is another group of Sisters that I am also thinking about this Easter season, the Religious of our country. I am having more than a little trouble understanding the proposed investigation of our Religious women, but I have no trouble knowing that they are part of God's plan and that they have stuck around because they have found Him and are determined to live out His call to serve. So dear Sisters, there may not be any symbolic things at your doorsteps this Easter morn, but there will be a multitude of prayers.

My Rainbow Connection

By Carolyn Ahrens

When I left the "Casa" at St Cecilia's in Kearny 21 years ago my mantra became Piety, Study and Action. I would visualize the Tripod and hear the rhythm of the 3 words "Piety, Study, Action". I actually felt like a little drummer boy.

And so my Cursillo journey began. I was taught and trained by those who had gone before me. I was tweaked and pruned and fine tuned. As my Tripod rooted itself I became confident enough to branch out and get involved with those whose lives I so greatly admired. I saw Christian Community alive and became part of it. Slowly I was immersed with others who shared the same Christian values I had and who worked hard to change their environ-

ments. Through the years I enriched my journey absorbing all the knowledge and experience from the Leaders in our movement and toiled in my own little vineyard filled with family, friends, co-workers and co-worshippers. I used every means available to learn more about the Cursillo method because it was a proven method that really worked. Today I feel fulfilled and blessed because I feel safe and secure in my Cursillo world.

As I reflect back from then until now, I realize there are many others who have left the Casa with the same desire to find those who have gone before them. If we continue to head the drummer's beat, Piety, Study and Action will lead

us to the Heart of the movement.

As Tony Seymour reminded us in his 4th day talk at Michelle's closing, the Tripod needs all three legs or it will tumble.

Cursillo is not going to tumble. Let's not make the weekend just a nice memory or a great experience. We who are more seasoned have a responsibility to tweak and prune and fine tune those who are searching to make the world a better place by filling it with God's Presence. We need to be available to those new potential Leaders in our movement and encourage them to continue to join us on this journey.

Inspirational Conferences from Archdiocese of Newark

For the Men:

The Archdiocese of Newark held its 2nd Annual Men's Conference on Saturday, March 13 at Seton Hall University in South Orange. This event drew 2,500 participants. Active Cursillistas were visible with approximately 40 in attendance.

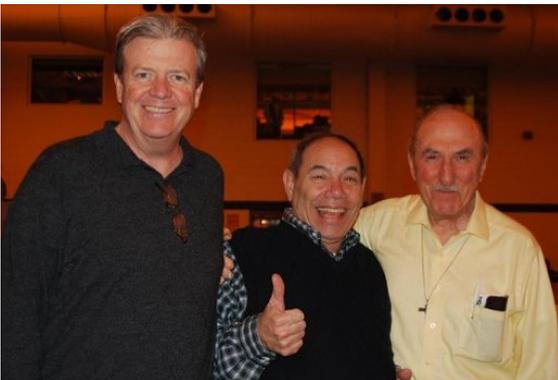
There were inspirational presentations by noted sports figures, including Joe Kleko, formerly of the New York Jets "New York Sack Exchange". Various mem-



Archbishop John Myers celebrates Mass at the Conference at Seton Hall University this month.

bers of the Knights of Columbus, deacons, diocesan priests, Franciscan Friars of the Renewal priests, bishops and Archbishop John Myers, who also later concluded the day's events by celebrating Mass.

Next year's goal is for the Archdiocese of Newark Cursillo Movement to have a "table" representation at this event, as other ministries did, so that we may spread the good Cursillo word to everyone we meet.



Candidate John Ryan, Cursillistas Roger Girdardin and Joe Genco enjoy the day.

bers of the clergy were on-hand as well giving witness on the presence of Jesus in their lives. A live musical group performed for all to join in singing.

There was a moving Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Service preceded by a parade of



Mike Marella, Silvio Sartori and Deacon Vince De Federle stop for a smile.



John Shlatterer and Paul Carris.

For the Women:

On March 20, The Women's Commission of the Archdiocese of Newark presented a day of reflection with the theme, "Hail the Cross, Our Only Hope".

The first speaker was Colleen Carroll Campbell, noted author and columnist and host of "Faith & Culture" on EWTN. She spoke on integrating Faith and Femininity and offered that the Feminine Genius is Spiritual Maternity: the inclination of women for radical openness to the human person, acceptance and unconditional love, which is a prerequisite for authentic cultural change. The Feminine approach is unique and the world needs us! Our mission is to surrender to God and let Him direct our Love. And we need only look to Mary our Mother for a role model on integrating Faith and Femininity.

The second speaker was Dianne Traflet, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology at Seton Hall U. and founder of several institutes for Family Spirituality. She authored a book on Edith Stein, a Polish Jew who converted to Catholicism in pre WWII Germany; later entered the convent and was killed at the prison camp of Auschwitz. Pope John Paul II canonized her and she became known as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.

Ms. Traflet invited us to walk the Way of the Cross, examining each station that Jesus took, and comparing it to that station in the life of Edith Stein. Living the Stations brings us to becoming one with Christ, which is our Sanctity. Helping Christ carry his cross fills us with Joy and helps us build His Kingdom.

A most inspirational and Spirit-filled Day!

What Happens at a Rector's Training Seminar?

A dedicated group of Cursillistas gathered at Assistant Lay Director Jean Kalemba's home last month for the semi-annual Rector's Training Day seminar. The purpose of the gathering is to instruct the Rector and their Angel / Warden on what to expect as they move forward with the monumental task of mounting a Cur-sillo Weekend.

Sponsored by the Weekend Committee under the auspices of the Secretariat, the presentations at this meeting are designed to create a comfort level

among the attendees regarding expectations, responsibilities, logistics and parameters within the context of Weekend planning and execution. Support materials are handed out. Presenters included Mary and Ken Bransfield, Pat Carr and John Tronolone.

It is our privilege and honor to announce that the Weekends taking

place in fall, 2010 will be headed up by Rector Vicky McCoy, Blessed Sacrament, Newark for the women and Rector Tony Seymour, Sacred Heart, Rochelle Park for the men. Vicky's Angel is Trish Ferrara, OLPH, Oakland. Tony's Warden is Donovan Green, Blessed Sacrament, Newark. Vicky and

Day session were the Support Rectors for Vicky and Tony, Ronnie Corso, Our Lady of Mercy, Jersey City and Pat Ferrara, OLPH, Oakland. Rounding out the group was Merilyn Smith, Blessed Sacrament, Newark, who will be one of the Co-Chairs for Vicky's Service Team. An

off-site meeting was held with Tony's Service Team Co-Chairs Jerry Vernice, Holy Family, Nutley and Tom Hennessey, Holy Angels, Little Falls.

The Secretariat and Weekend Committee strives to present Rectors and Warden / Angels with a comprehensive instructional pro-

gram, offering advice to them on how to assemble talented, diverse and dedicated Teams. It marks the starting point of a spiritual journey that has the power to transform lives.



Front row, left to right: Trisha Ferrara, Vicki McCoy, Merilyn Smith, Ronnie Corso, Mary Bransfield. Back row: John Tronolone, Tony Seymour, Donovan Green, Ken Bransfield, Pat Carr, and Pat Ferrara.

Tony were tasked at the meeting with recruiting Spiritual Directors and Team members for their Weekends. Trish and Donovan were presented with concepts relating to success in the Angel and Warden roles.

Also attending this Rectors Training

An excerpt from "The Little Black Book"

When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." (Mk. 14:37-38)

Jesus has been praying to "Abba". The disciples have been sleeping. By now it is probably after midnight. It is Good Friday.

When Jesus says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," he isn't just talking about the disciples. He is "the Word made *flesh*."

Headed into suffering and death, Jesus was willing in spirit, but he experienced the hard reality of human life: It is difficult to cross the bridge from good intentions to good deeds.

We could all tell stories of good intentions stacked inside us but not yet translated into action. It's so hard.

But Jesus has crossed that bridge and he'll take my hand to help me do the same.

The best thing to do when I face a tough situation is to find my weak points and turn to the Lord for help. Paul learned that reliance on Christ and said, "When I am weak, then I am strong."

“Can I Take Your Bag?”

Michelle Seymour, the Rector of the Women’s 161st Cursillo, asked me, “Who tells the women what to bring on the weekend?” The short answer that I gave to her was “Their Sponsor calls before the weekend and tells them what they will need.” But the question stayed with me as some questions do. “Who tells women what to bring on a Cursillo weekend?”

As women, we tend to routinely carry a number of things with us. Just watch closely as a woman frantically tears through her pocketbook looking for an elusive item! Along with the ubiquitous wallet, make-up bag, cell phone, keys, comb, hair-brush, loose change, coupons, tissues, and lipstick, we also travel with our families, our friends, indeed, all of those whom we love. We drag our worries, our stressors and our concerns. We cart our hopes and our ideals, our yearnings and our daydreams. Too often, we haul along our frustrations, our failed relationships, and an acute awareness of our own shortcomings. Who needs to tell women what to bring anywhere when we drag so much of it everywhere! And, lest it is forgotten, we pile on our notion of God and what we believe to be God’s

notion of us. Positive or negative, into the bag it goes and we hoist the whole bundle over our shoulder.

Physically and figuratively, the candidates lug their baggage into the Youth Center in Kearny on Thursday night. There they are greeted by a member of the Team or the Service Team who asks, “Can I take your bag?” This is where the Youth Center becomes the Casa.



Many seemingly simple gestures can reveal levels of meaning when considered carefully. Upon reflection, those of us who have made a Cursillo

By Teri Carr

realize that “Can I take your bag?” truly means, “Can I help you with your burdens? Knowing that the contents are both fragile and precious, will you trust me enough to let me carry your bag? Can I carry your Cross? Can I be your Simone for just a little while? Can I take your bag?”

During the course of the weekend, through the talks and table discussions, the prayer services, the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, many of the women will go through the contents of what they carry and evaluate the continued need for many of the items. Some will be added, some renewed and some discarded. Through Grace, things may be shifted or shed, repacked or replaced. This is where the Casa becomes Holy Ground.

Departing the Casa after the Closing on Sunday, hopefully the babe chicks leave behind some of what has been weighing them down. Our prayer is that they now have enough room in that bag to take with them the uplifting Love with which they have been surrounded: “Pouring outward the Light from within, the Grace of our God, His infinite Life.”

For those without e-mail:

A USPS mailing will be sent regarding the Day of Renewal, with details and schedule of the day and directions to Corpus Christi.

Cursillo Newsletters are being sent out via e-mail only. If you know of anyone who would like to receive it, please send their e-mail ID to me at

decolores7@optonline.net

Joanne Rinkus,
Editor

To contact any members of the Secretariat, visit our website at

Mycursillo.com

A Personal Look at Group Reunion

By Mike Kelly

Thirty years ago, I decided to attend a meeting with three other men I barely knew. It was a dark and stormy night, with flashes of lightening, when Mat Glowski, Jim Reilly and I gathered in the den at Tom Geffert's home in Teaneck.

So began our Group Reunion.

Jimmy Carter was still president and the Iranian hostage crisis was just beginning. That's how long ago this was.

Looking back, I don't recall what we said at that first meeting, though I distinctly remember a thunderstorm passing overhead and rain pelting the windows. But from that initial gathering, we began a long spiritual walk that still continues to be a key part of each of our lives.

At the time, I would have never guessed that I would stick with a men's spiritual group for all these years. I could hardly believe I was actually attending a meeting. (A spiritual sharing group? Me?) I certainly had no idea that the Group would become the foundation for wonderful friendships. But I consider that decision to join a Group Reunion to be one of the most significant in my life.

Simply put, Group Reunion is a method of connecting – with God and with His people. More importantly, it is an opportunity to reflect on one of the most common questions of our lives: Where is God?

I did not fully understand

at the time how important it was to find a method to help answer that question. I figured going to Mass and saying an occasional prayer was enough. Even making a Cursillo in the fall of 1979 did not convince me that I needed to work on building spiritual connections or finding the time for reflection.

Yes, I listened attentively to the talks about piety, study and action on my Cursillo. And, yes, I could look to many good men and women for inspiration in my parish and in the wider Cursillo community. But Group Reunion forced me to take those fuzzy concepts and that seemingly distant yearning for inspiration and make it personal.

If I wanted to be close to God, how could I do that? If I wanted to see God in the world, how would I have to change my spiritual outlook? If I wanted to understand piety, study and action, what would I have to do with my heart, my mind, my hands?

Our group today has grown considerably from the original four members. We now have about 20 active members and a mailing list of almost 40 men.

One consistent hallmark is that we don't turn anyone away. Another characteristic is that we try to use the Group Reunion card as our guide for each meeting. A third important characteristic is that we refuse to give up -- on each other or on Cursillo.

I have found the Group Reunion card and its focus on basic questions to be a brilliant spiritual

tool. What was my moment closest to Christ? Answering that question honestly and completely can be the opening to a deep and insightful spiritual experience. It can also open the door to understanding how much work I need to do in building my relationship with Jesus.

I can't always point clearly to a moment when I felt close to Jesus. It took many years for me to accept that our spiritual journeys are not always filled with poignant moments. Indeed, my own spiritual journey has had its share of dry patches – with frustrating periods when God seemed to be hiding. But Group Reunion helped me to keep going, to not give up.

The group is not perfect. There are some long, embarrassing stretches when we did not meet as often as we should have. And sometimes our meetings are not as spiritually focused as they should be. But as new men have joined, our sharing has become deeper and our lessons more meaningful.

We almost always begin with coffee – and a few too many donuts and slices of coffee cake. We always end by clapping hands and huddling to pray, usually for people who are sick. In between, we tell stories about our search for God.

We've stuck to this system for 30 years. Who knew it could work, right?

But it did work.

And it continues.