



Cursillo Courier

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Archdiocese of Newark, NJ
Cursillo Movement

When Promoting Cursillo, Think Outside the Box

By Pat Carr, Lay Director

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Dates to Remember in 2011:

- ◆ April 7 Opening for Women's 163rd Weekend
- ◆ April 10 Closing for Women's 163rd Weekend
- ◆ May 7 Day of Renewal
- ◆ May 20 Ultreya

I've been thinking a lot lately about ways we can promote Cursillo to a wider audience. How can we get the word out, perhaps increasing the number of potential Candidates on Weekends? Or perhaps even increase the number of Weekends we're able to facilitate on an annual basis, wouldn't that be nice? Years ago the Archdiocese of Newark held far more than our now-standard two Men's and two Women's Weekends per year.

In some ways we may be considered an "exclusive" movement in that each person wishing to make a Cursillo is required to have a Cursillista sponsor them. One doesn't simply hear or read about Cursillo by happenstance and say "I'm ready for this, when's the next Weekend?" Much as we would like to think that putting up a billboard or running an ad for a Cursillo Weekend would be effective, as the movement is all about personally recruiting leaders for Christ, that wouldn't necessarily be appropriate.

This is a one-on-one re-

cruitment endeavor. We have the luxury of targeting those that, as Cursillistas, we feel would benefit most from making a Weekend, and those that would have the most positive impact in attracting others to Cursillo upon making the Weekend. That could potentially include Cornerstone brothers and sisters, fellow Knights, Catholic Daughters, Renew or Why Catholic participants, Rosary Altar Society or Holy Name members, fellow CCD teachers, lectors, Eucharistic Ministers or Pre-Cana team or choir members. Or your sister-in-law. Or your neighbor's brother. Or that nice woman from the Bible Study. Or that person you see at Sunday or daily Mass you've always been meaning to speak to. Or the co-worker that you sometimes have spiritually-related discussions with at lunch. As long as they're baptized Catholics!

Here are some recent activities I've been involved with to help promote Cursillo.

Our local Cursillo movement this year has teamed up with the Lay Movement Partnership Committee, an outreach of the Archdio-

cese of Newark Office for Evangelization. The goal of this committee, made up of various Catholic movements within the Archdiocese, is to help their constituents spread the light of Christ through each of their respective ministries. It's our hope that through our participation in this

committee, Cursillo may perhaps have an increased profile within the Archdiocese of Newark.

Through contacts made through our involvement with the Partnership Committee, Jean Kalemba and I were able to secure a Cursillo "table" presence at the March 5 Men's Conference and March 19 Women's Day of Reflection that took place at Seton Hall University. Staffed with Cursillistas and with a promotional banner proclaiming our movement, we personally greeted literally hundreds of participants, engaging many of them in conversation, giving us the opportunity to promote Cursillo.

I can't tell you how thrilled I was to speak to so many willing listeners about Cursillo, most of which had never heard of our move-

Pat Carr, Lay Director, cont'd

ment. We handed each person we met a brochure that describes what we're about. It was so very encouraging to hear so many times at the end of our conversations "When is the next one taking place?" Not to worry – the 2011 Weekend dates were listed in the brochure handed out, along with contact information.

By the grace of God may these efforts help to spark interest among those who would otherwise never have known there is such a thing as Cursillo.

Here's one other, "smaller" way in which I was recently able to promote Cursillo that came up quite unexpectedly:

I listen to The Catholic Channel on Sirius XM radio in my car every day. Satellite radio reaches a national audience and is even heard internationally through the power of the net. One show I listen to is called The Busted Halo, hosted by the very personable and funny Fr. Dave Dwyer. The show is broadcast out of New York City, so to me it has a local feel.

It's very light in nature – it's more of a comedy show than anything else. Sort of like Imus with a decidedly Catholic bent. I always laugh when listening to this show.

On Thursdays the show is dedicated to what Fr. Dave calls "Faith in Culture". He invites listeners to call in to share their experiences of faith, spirituality and God as manifested through the popular culture in everyday life. Most typically listeners share about a popular song that contains spiritual references.

I'm not the "call in to a radio show" type. I had never done it. On this particular Thursday a few weeks back, though, Fr. Dave shared that the show would be broadcasting from Los Angeles the following week and invited listeners to call in with California-themed personal examples of Faith in Culture. I immediately phoned, got right through, and speaking to Fr. Dave on-air, relayed the song I had thought of: "God Only Knows" by The Beach Boys. He liked my suggestion, played a bit of the

song and then engaged me in conversation, asking me where I was calling from. I responded "Kearny, New Jersey." I had just pulled the car into the parking lot of the Casa for the Opening of the Men's Weekend. I said to him, "As a matter of fact, I'm in Kearny for the start of a Cursillo Weekend." To which Fr. Dave responded, "Oh, tell us about that." Again, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to spend a minute promoting our movement and getting our name out there to a fairly sizable audience that also may never have heard the word Cursillo.

So I ask you to think about ways you, too, can promote Cursillo. Things like blurbs in church bulletins about upcoming Weekends, invitations to friends who haven't made Cursillo to attend Ultreya with you, or even Facebook posts referencing your Cursillo activities. Be creative!

If we all work together, using our God-given talents to consciously further our cause, I know that our collective actions will bring our local movement to new and greater heights.

Join Us for a Pentecost Sunday Celebration

The Lay Movement Partnership Committee, an outreach of the Archdiocese of Newark Office for Evangelization, is sponsoring its 3rd Annual Pentecost Mass at Queen of Peace Parish, North Arlington on Sunday, June 12 at 5:00 p.m.

This Mass is designed to bring together the Lay Movements and Ethnic Apostolates, including Cursillo, of the Archdiocese. All Cursillistas are invited and encouraged to attend. Bishop Edgar da Cuhna, Coordinator for the Evan-

gelization Task Force for the Archdiocese of Newark, will be our Mass celebrant. A "pot luck" dinner for all in attendance will follow.

Please consider joining us for this celebratory event at which all Lay Movements within the Archdiocese will be represented. Let's rally for a big turnout to show the Archdiocese of Newark Office for Evangelization that Cursillo is fully committed to spreading the gospel of Christ. And don't forget to wear your red!

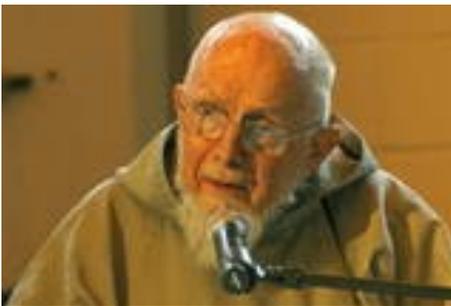


Cursillo Promoted at Archdiocesan Men’s Conference

Approximately thirty active Cursillistas were on hand out of the more than 2,400 men in attendance at the annual Archdiocese of Newark Men’s Conference that took place on Saturday, March 5 at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.

This event offers men of the Archdiocese the opportunity to gather, pray, share, re-connect and experience the wonder and glory of Catholicism *en masse*. There are formal witness presentations, opportunities to listen to and sing along with live musicians, break bread together at lunch, participate in Eucharistic Adoration and attend Mass, this year celebrated by Archdiocese of Newark Bishop Edgar da Cunha.

Notable presenters that day included Fr. Benedict Groeschel, former New



Fr. Benedict Groeschel

York Giants star Chris Godfrey and former Major League Baseball star Darrel Miller.

This is the third consecutive year the Archdiocese has sponsored this event. And the first year that our local Cursillo movement has had Cursillo “table” representation to promote our movement to all in attendance.

Donovan Green, Bill Dougherty and Pat Carr, all Cursillo Secretariat members, manned the table set up to promote Cursillo. Only a handful of tables were allowed to promote their groups, so this was a big honor and a wonderful way to get the Cursillo message out. Approximately 400 Cursillo brochures were directly handed out to potential Cursillo candidates. The impromptu Cursillo sales team present that day directly engaged attendees in conversation, explaining to them what Cursillo is all about. In this way, potential Candidates learned first-hand a little bit about what Cursillo encompasses.



Many, many positive responses were received. The most encouraging question frequently heard that day was “When are the next

Weekends taking place?” Not to worry, the brochure they each took away listed all the pertinent information they will need to continue to explore Cursillo, including dates of upcoming Weekends.

By the grace of God, perhaps next fall, some of the men approached that day may be Candidates on our October Cursillo Men’s Weekend.



Bill Dougherty, Donovan Green, and Dave Wreck speak Cursillo.

Cursillo Day of Renewal Set for Saturday, May 7

Calling all Cursillistas! Mark your calendars for Cursillo’s Annual Day of Renewal taking place on Saturday, May 7 once again at Corpus Christi, Hasbrouck Heights. This not-to-be-missed event is an excellent way for Cursillistas to reconnect with one another and recharge their Cursillo batteries.

The day starts at 9:00 a.m. with a light breakfast, followed by Group Reunion, formal presentations, discussions, a catered lunch, sharing, a final presentation and concludes with Mass. Msgr. Lew Papera, pastor of Corpus Christi and friend of Cursillo, will be presenting and leading in the celebration of Mass. Other presenters that day include Uju Egonu from Blessed Sacra-

ment / St. Charles Borromeo, Newark and Mike Marella, also from Corpus Christi. The day wraps up by 4:00 p.m.

If you only make it to one Cursillo event the entire year, this is the one to attend. Watch your email for future announcements about this event and for sign-up information. Let’s fill the house that day!

Rector's Training Day Acts as Kick-Off to Cursillo Weekend

A Rector's Training Day took place on February 12, once again at Assistant Lay Director Jean Kalemba's home. This twice-annual event signals the start of the mapping out of how the Men's and Women's Cursillo Weekends coming up nine months later will unfold.

The training day is designed to bring together the core Team members of each of the upcoming Weekends. At this gathering, members of the Secretariat Weekend Committee explain standardized procedures to the Rectors present as well as to their respective Angel and Warden. Ken Bransfield heads up our Weekend Committee.

Those present that day included Fall, 2011 Rector Trish Ferrara and her Angel, Theresa Taylor and Fall, 2011 Rector Donovan Green. As Donovan's warden, Joe Blythe, had a scheduling conflict and was unable to attend, his training took place off-line.

Also present were those serving as Support Rectors, in this case Linda Armonaitis for Trish and Joe Clark for Donovan. Each Rector is required to enlist the help of a Support Rector. The Support Rector, not part of the Team that participates directly on the Weekend, acts as a sounding board and confidante

to the Rector, and is responsible for recruiting a Support Team. Each member of the Support Team is, likewise, assigned a Team member that they mentor throughout the Team formation process, prior to the start of the actual Cursillo Weekend. The Support Team member is primarily responsible for offering help and encouragement to the talking Team member that he or she is assigned to. Like the Support Rector, Support Team members do not take part in the actual Cursillo Weekend event.

Service Team Chiefs are also asked to attend this Rector's Training Day event. Irene Portali and Harold Chinedum Uche have each graciously volunteered to serve in the Service Team Chief capacity for the Fall, 2011 Women's and Men's Teams, respectively. Service Team Chiefs recruit Service Team members. Service Team members attend the actual Weekends along with the Team members and Candidates, ministering to the physical needs of those present on the Weekend. They also provide entertainment, refresh-

ments and help to set up, clean up and break down at the conclusion of the Weekend. Service Teams are an invaluable asset to the Weekend and are instrumental in the Weekend's success.

Also present at this training day were Cursillo Weekend Section Coordinator Mary Bransfield, Deacon Dominic Messina, recruited by Donovan to act as one of the Spiritual Directors on the Fall '11 Men's Weekend, and Mike Kelly and Pat Carr from the Secretariat.

At this Training Day presentations are made, logistics are hammered out, questions are answered and a game plan is set. Many Cursillistas come together to put on a Cursillo Weekend – it is truly a very large group effort. With so many volunteers necessary for the staging of our Weekends, it's easy to see why it is vitally important for many to

pitch in. Please give your most serious consideration when it's your turn to be asked to help out. Just say yes!



Call for Candidates for the Women's 163rd Weekend



"A Heart Like His"

We need your help! The Women's 163rd Cursillo is set for Thursday, April 7 to Sunday April 10. As of this writing we have a total of nine Candidates signed up. Our minimum is fifteen, so we're still a long way off head-count wise with only about two weeks left before the start of the weekend.

This Women's Weekend promises to be very special. Rector Joanne Gebbia and Angel Kate Cheski have assembled a first-class team, including Spiritual Directors Fr. Thomas Lipnicki, Fr. Ernie Rush and Sr. Linda Klaiss; Mary Ellen Weiland will handle Music. Plus a Team of top-notch presenters along with seasoned veterans

in the Personal Contacts roles. The wonderful "Team Tola" will be the Service Team, headed up by Co-Chiefs Annie Ventola and Gail Artola.

With all of these generous and talented volunteers on-board, we're looking for a full complement of Candidates to experience the wonder, awe and joy of Cursillo.

Now's the time to "seal the deal" with those seeds you've been planting, inviting friends and family to make a Cursillo. Please don't delay. Applications may be found at mycursillo.com.

Spring Brings New Life

Spring has finally arrived, at least the calendar tells us it has. It has been a long, cold winter. Hopefully the mounds of snow are now a distant memory and the floods that plagued us in early March have dissipated. Spring blooms eternal.

Many years ago, as rector, the song that ended my Total Security Rollo was "The Rose" by Bette Midler. Much to my joy, as the song played, beautiful red roses arrived, delivered with love, by Sam Ventola, one for each on that weekend. Sam has journeyed on, now one in Christ, but the memory of that moment comes to my mind each spring. "Remember in the winter, far beneath the bitter snow, lies the seed that with the sun's love in the spring becomes the rose." Since then four of my children have married and as mother of the groom I danced with each son to the song, "The Rose". This May my only daughter will marry, and since her dad Carl has also journeyed on, the traditional father

-daughter dance will be mother-daughter; the song, "The Rose".

But sometimes we "think that love is only for the lucky and the strong". Spiritual winters can creep



into our lives, times when we cannot feel God's love. We become disconnected. Life becomes less joy, more burden. The mustard seed freezes. It's not something we want, it just happens. The rea-

By Jean Kalembo

son can be complex and hidden or so obvious that when we look in the mirror it hits us in the face. But whatever the reason we know it is not a good place to be. No song lyric, no matter how well sung, will bring us back to where we want, where we need to be. Jesus went to the desert to pray, forty days of prayer, resisting temptation, re-connecting with the Father, His humanity and divinity one. Do you remember your chapel visit? Holding onto the crucifix, laying aside all your defenses, allowing yourself to become vulnerable, baring your soul? Lent is our time to re-connect, to empty out some of the human to make some room for the divine.

"Remember in the winter, far beneath the bitter snow, lies the seed that with the Son's love in the spring becomes the rose." Bloom on!

Women's 160th Weekend Hosts March, 2011 Ultreya

The Women's 160th "Trust in His Love" Cursillo Weekend facilitated our March 18, 2011 Archdiocesan Ultreya on Friday evening in the Blessed Mother Room at the Casa in Kearny. Angela Vomero, who served as Rector, volunteered as Master of Ceremonies. Janet Gyss and Roz Hughes, also of the Women's 160th, served as Music Ministers that night. The evening began with an Opening Prayer followed by the group singing "Christ Be Our Light". We then split up for our Group Reunion sharing. There were close to fifty Cursillistas present.

Maryann Milligan, Sacred Heart, Hawthorn, a Candidate from the Women's

160th, then delivered the formal Witness talk, explaining how through the many difficult challenges she has faced, she has always been able to rely on God and her faith to see her through. She credits her Cursillo experience with giving her the fortitude necessary to see her through more recent challenges.

Donna Monticello, also a Candidate from the Women's 160th, offered the Lay Response to Maryann's witness. Donna applauded Maryann for "staying the course" and not giving up, saying that her faith is an inspiration to all, especially those facing similar adversities.

Cursillista Fr. Paul Cannariato, St. Mary's, Closter, gave the Spiritual Summary. Fr. Paul shared that it is incumbent upon all Cursillistas to be diligent in sharing our faith and the spreading of the gospel message, as Maryann and Donna had just done.

The evening concluded with a Closing Prayer and the singing of "Lead Me Lord". There was plenty of time for joyful fellowship prior to our departure just after 9:00 p.m. Mark your calendars – our next Ultreya takes place on Friday, May 20 at the Casa in Kearny. Why not consider joining us that night to catch up with Cursillo friends?

Cursillo Mourns the Loss of Jack Funesti, Past Lay Director

Our local Cursillo movement mourns the loss of John K. (Jack) Funesti, who passed peacefully on Saturday, March 12, 2011 at the age of 75. Jack served as a Past Lay Director of our Cursillo, and was loved by all blessed to know him. He is survived by his wife Peggy, children and grandchildren.

A resident of Montvale, Jack was a member of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Park Ridge since 1968. Along with Cursillo, Jack served in many ministries there, including Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Past Parish Council President and an original core Team member for Men's Cornerstone at OLM. He was also active in fundraising for the Archdiocese of Newark's Immaculate Conception Seminary.

Following is Cursillista Lou Mondello's re-cap of Jack's wake service.

Peg and I went to Jack Funesti's wake last night. Jack is a former Lay Director. When we entered the room we noticed the chairs were arranged in small 6-chair circles. When we went up to the casket to say a prayer we noticed Jack had a De Colores sign centered just above him. His prayer card had his picture on the front and a short prayer that he who believes in Him will never die. Then at the bottom were the words De Colores.

We then learned why the chairs were arranged in small circles. Of course, small group reunions that he requested. And as you can imagine everyone was sitting in the chairs talking. It was quite a sight. I just had to share it with you.

Peggy and family, our hearts and prayers are with you at this difficult time. May Jack rest in the peace of the Lord.



The late Jack Funesti

Focusing on What's Important

By Terri Carr

My Aunt Eileen made her Cursillo weekend several years ago in New York, since she is from Yonkers. Pat and I gathered palanca from family members, prayed for her, the other candidates and the team, and attended her closing. As so many of us do, she found her weekend inspiring and uplifting, a source of grace. Today, because she has Alzheimer's, she has no memory of that weekend or, indeed, many other beautiful life experiences.

Many of us have loved ones with this awful disease, so you will understand what I mean when I say how painful it is to observe how

they fail from one week to the next. I have even seen my aunt decline from one day to the next and I dread the day that she does not recognize me.

When we are together, the first question she invariably asks is what the family is "up to." I am one of 9 children, 6 of whom are married, and there are 15 nieces and nephews, so I usually have some news to share. Now, however, I have to remind her of who everyone is. "Diane is married to Jim, remember? They live in Massachusetts and Chris and Catherine are their children." "Oh, you know Chris. He is married to Jeanmarie, remember? They have Devin and Sarah." "No, Tom is not my father; he is my brother. My father was your

brother Peter, remember?" and so it goes.

What does not change is that every time I say goodbye, my aunt throws her arms around me and says how much she has always loved me and my brothers and sisters. She adds that we are the children that she never had and she has always regarded us as her own. She tells me that not a day goes by that she doesn't forget to ask the Good Lord to bless us all, and keep us safe and close to Him.

So, although she is a little fuzzy about the details, the important things, she remembers.

THE WEEKEND REUNION: A RECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

By Tony Seymour

(Editors note: While many Cursillistas think the Cursillo Weekend ends at the Closing on Sunday afternoon, in reality the Cursillo isn't fully over until the Team, new Cursillistas and Service Team gather to reflect on the Weekend experience, sharing their thoughts and reconnecting with one another. This event is known as the Weekend Reunion. Following is a recount of the recent Men's 179th Weekend Reunion by Tony Seymour, Men's 179th Rector.)

With attention normally focused upon the importance of our Fourth Day group reunions and Ultreyas, our Lay Director, Pat Carr, has asked me to reflect for a moment upon the potentially powerful impact of the Weekend Reunion.

I was blessed to be the Rector of this past fall's 179th Men's Weekend. The theme of our Weekend, Christ's invitation to "Come Journey With Me", aptly described this Cursillo.

Inspired by three Christ-filled Spiritual Directors, Msgr. Paul Bocchichio, Fr. Charlie Pinyan and Deacon Kevin Regan, our Team journey to the Weekend often seemed to be nothing more than our own leisurely walk and talk with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, during which we stopped eight times for Team Masses, and a final Eucharistic Adoration to simply sit before the Lord to hear His Weekend instructions. Our journey was actively focused upon a dedication to our Blessed Mother and the Eucharist, a determination to bring the Holy Spirit a "full-house" of twenty-six applicants and weekly prayer for each member of our teams' (rollo, service and support) and prospective candidate's families. Throughout formation, a Petition Pouch carrying the name of each Team and candidate family member and hundreds of Cursillo-wide prayer requests was prayed over during each Team meeting and at daily Mass in the interim.

The Weekend itself was blessed with a palpable Christ-presence. With a dedication to Mary, round-the-clock prayer, sacrifice and silent witnessing

by our visibly exhausted Service Team and a Cursillo-wide prayer chain, and round-the-clock availability to be alone before the Blessed Sacrament, our twenty-three candidates [only three of our twenty-six applicants missed the



Weekend] knew Christ was the foundation of their lives before the Weekend was over! What more could the Holy Spirit want?

The answer came powerfully---in our eight-week Reunion, at Guardian Angel, Allendale on January 14th, which was packed with thirty-one Spirit-filled men hungry to share, and build upon, their Fourth Day journeys. This Reunion was very different from any other that I ever have experienced. It was not a "reunion" at all, but, rather, an actual *continuation* of our Weekend. We began with prayerful recognition of our Weekend's dedication to our Blessed Mother and the sacrifices of our Teams' and candidates' individual family members, followed by a moving witnessing from Jesus, in the person of our Service Team's Dave Wreck. Then, we broke into three separate groups who, holding Cursillo Crosses, shared with our Lord in 20-minute continued-from-the-Weekend "chapel visits". Finally, led in moving song by our own Lennie Joseph, before bursting back upon our Fourth Day journeys, we joined in a humble Fourth Day Mass of thanksgiving, concelebrated by *three* Cursillo priests, Msgr. Paul, Fr. Charlie and our own Fr. Luk Tran.

Imagine Christ's pride and joy at these, His Spiritual Directors— one, two and even three priests, and a Deacon, and the Eucharist at every Team meeting. We, He, truly are blessed!

How important is the Weekend Reunion to the Spirit and Cursillo? This experience has taught me that the Weekend Reunion is an essential "fourth leg" to Christ's tripod of Weekend, Group Reunion and Ultreya, and since the reunion I have been asked by several members of our Weekend to hold reunions annually or semi-annually. I would like to share with you e-mailed comments I received just this week from our Reunion's participants:

"The reunion made me realize that the true God experience was not a figment of my imagination. Seeing all of my brothers warmed my heart, boosted my ability to love and be loved and increased my ability to be a true messenger of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and God, our Father. My life has become so, so much clearer about where we all fit into this wonderful life that Jesus' great sacrifice enabled not only me, but all of us to have.... Stay strong in Christ until we are able to see and hug each other at another reunion."

*"The Reunion was definitely a positive follow-up....Although I've been lucky enough to be in a 4th Day with [one of our Spiritual Directors], the other benefit of the reunion was for those who weren't so lucky, **and I believe some have found 4th Day groups as a result of the Reunion.**"*

"Obviously something profound happened to all of them [us], something they [we] all wanted to revisit. I found a couple of private conversations more supportive and enlightening than the group-sharing. I guess I could say I had a couple of two-person reunions that night. I'm sure the Holy Spirit directed me to

Weekend Reunion, cont'd.

where He wanted me.”

“Mass at the reunion was moving. I ‘flashed back’ to the Masses celebrated during the weekend, and relived my thoughts and feelings—an exceptionally positive experience.”

“What a powerful and joyous feeling it is to be part of such a group! The reunion is an extension of that same feeling; these are my brothers who accompanied me through a life-changing experience. I hope there

are more reunions in the works!”

“It was a very touching experience for me...very special. I liked the small group setting discussions. We were able to open up among ourselves. ... I always enjoyed ending our meetings with a Mass. It ties everything together. I would like to see us get together maybe every quarter.”

The Journey continues! De Colores!



Cursillistas Start the New Year with Ultreya

The Men’s 177th “All Are Welcome” Cursillo Weekend facilitated our January, 2011 new year kick-off Archdiocesan Ultreya on Friday evening, January 21 at the Casa in Kearny. Bob Weiland, who served as Rector of the Men’s 177th, volunteered as our Master of Ceremonies. Music Minister was Gordon Roehrer, assisted by Mary Ellen Weiland, Joe Allegro and Pat Carr. The evening began with a lively gathering song and centering Welcoming Prayer. Not unexpectedly, the room buzzed with the “turning of the chairs”, signaling the start of our Group Reunion exercise. At each of our Archdiocesan Ultreyas, held every other

month, all present look forward to sharing their faith journeys with one another in this Cursillo-endorsed format.

Joe Alberella, Sacred Heart, Hawthorn, a Candidate from the Men’s 177th, then delivered the formal Witness talk, explaining how his spirituality has shaped him throughout his life and sharing where his faith life is heading from this point, post-Cursillo. He shared that through some more recent hardships and setbacks, his faith and family continue to sustain him.

Fred Donegan, also a Candidate from the Men’s 177th, offered the Lay Response to Joe’s witness. Fred offered his take on what was

presented, and also witnessed as to how his spiritual journey has continued since making the Cursillo Weekend.

Cursillista Paul Carris from Corpus Christi, Hasbrouck Heights, gave the Spiritual Summary. After five years in formation, Paul will be ordained a deacon on May 21 at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newark.

All Cursillistas are invited and encouraged to attend these Ultreya events where we are afforded the opportunity to take lessons learned over the course of the Weekend and implement them into our everyday lives.



The Men of the 177th Men's Weekend gather at the Ultreya in January

A Moving Witness

(Editor's note: Cecilia is presently facing difficult trials. Please go to www.mycursillo.com to read of her recent hardships and how you may be able to help. The following is a recount written by Cecilia describing her faith journey and how Cursillo has impacted her life.)

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Corinthians 5-7

Although I have been a Christian for most of my life, I often experienced a spiritual dryness. I would feel empty spiritually. I yearned for God. One of those periods was the year 2005. I had just relocated from Millville in South Jersey to the City of Orange in North Jersey. My social life was great. I started a dream job. There was no reason for the wave of sadness that I had. I joined a local Church, Our Lady of the Valley. I did not know anyone yet. I had the habit of attending Mass on Sundays and sneaked out right after Mass. But this Sunday was different. As I was exiting, Carolyn Ahrens, who is now a great friend, a sister in Christ and a fellow Cursillista, stopped me. Carolyn offered to pick me up later that afternoon to attend an event at Blessed Sacrament Church in Newark. Normally I would have said no but I agreed. In the car that afternoon Carolyn talked about Cursillo. I had never heard about the movement before but because I had been longing for God, I enthusiastically decided to go.

God made it possible for me to attend the next Women's Weekend. What an uplifting time I had! I felt fulfilled spiritually. I had a sense of satisfaction and peace. I was high spiritually. God gave me a new life that started that fall.

I was not born into a Catholic home but I realized on that Weekend that my family had lived a Cursillo lifestyle of Piety, Study and Action. We tried to live a holy life. We devoured the word of God, the Bible and we put what we studied into action. I learned to depend on God's grace and mercy at a very early age. Walking by faith and not by sight meant so much to me literally. The Bible defines faith as the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. (Hebrew 11-1)

My parents were Samuel and Elizabeth Ojoawo. My father married very late in life: he was in his seventies while my mother was in her twenties. My Father was a Pastor of a Church called Christ Apostolic church (CAC). A few months after I was born, my father received God's calling to leave my hometown and idol pastor a small Church in a rural village ridden with worshipers and pagans. They worshipped trees, stones, irons etc. The village had no amenities; no pipe-borne water, no hospital or school. No one owned any vehicle, not even a bicycle. Yet Samuel believed strongly that he was called by God and relocated us. The small Church grew larger and many of the idol worshipers became Christians. My father, by the grace of God, was used by Him to change lives. He certainly bloomed where he was planted.

My parents' main goal for me was to be educated. This seemed like a joke for a man who left a modern town with amenities to live in a remote village. The nearest school was miles away. My father did not own a car or even a bicycle. Yet my father believed that I would go to

By Cursillista Cecilia Ojoawo

school. Again God came through for him. The Salvation Army built the first school in the village and it was completed by the time I was ready to attend.

Readers might suppose that because my father was a man of faith, he had immunity from sufferings, problems, afflictions or disappointments. This was not so. Samuel's faith was always tested. In my ninth year after receiving my third small Pox vaccination, I contracted full-blown small pox and as a result was in a coma for weeks. Again with prayers I came through but lost my sight.

My young mother became depressed because of my blindness and died ten months later. When



Caroline Ahrens with author Cecilia Ojoawo

fellow pastors came to console my father, they were stunned that his faith and trust in God was so strong. His dream for me, his blind daughter, was to get a good education and have a fulfilling life. This was a ridiculous statement at the time but Samuel did not walk by sight but by faith.

Interestingly, the first school for blind children was built in a city about fifty miles away. It was called

A Moving Witness, cont'd.

Pacelli School for the Blind. It was built by the Nigerian government and run by the Sisters of Charity. I was educated there for elementary school, and attended Notre Dame Girls' Secondary School and my education progressed.

All because of God's grace and mercy.

"People are your clothing." Is a common saying in Yoruba, one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. This statement is often used to highlight the importance of families, neighbors and friends in one's life. I believed very

strongly in this saying. One of God's many graces and mercies to me is the gift of friends.

When I made my Cursillo in 2005, I could not predict how my fellow Cursillistas would support me during this time of trial with Immigration. I wish I could say the battle is over. But not yet. I know that with God all is possible. I know that God will not put me to shame. I continue to put my trust in Him.

My Cursillo experience bridged my family values with those of Cursillo. I

will continue my 4th day with my Cursillo friends. Our tripod will not tumble because we hold each other up and challenge one another to make the world a better place "one friend and at time".

I wish to express my deep appreciation to all my fellow Cursillistas who have supported me by prayers, love and have generously donated money for my cause.

God bless you all.

De Colores

On Day of Reflection for Women of Archdiocese By Caroline Ahrens

On Saturday, March 19, having spent the day with 800+ women at Seton Hall University, I came home to reflect on the perks of the day. The Women's Commission of the Archdiocese of Newark offered a Day of Reflection with the theme, "Our Collaboration with God".

Being blessed with a Cursillo mentality I always look for a Cursillo message. That message was so easy to find. It was loud and clear as presented by Dr. Susan Wright, a professor at St. John Vianney Seminary in Denver. Dr. Susan gently suggested for us to become the human beings we were meant to be. She feels things are left undone for us, as women, to fulfill. In her funny, light-hearted and free-spirited way, she suggested this can be done by conforming oneself

to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The words we heard during the course of the day were the very same familiar words we hear in Cursillo: "authentic", "evangelization", "bloom where you are planted", "fully human", "fully alive".

Typical of our own Cursillo weekends, one could see the results of the mutual support needed to make everything run so smoothly. Holy Hour, Benediction and Divine Mercy Chaplet added a perfect touch to an already well-planned day. The warm welcome of Bishop Manuel Cruz prior to the celebration of Mass was so sincere it made me proud to be a woman in the Archdiocese of Newark. He

extended heart-felt regards from Archbishop Myers who was recuperating from recent eye surgery.

Making time for this event was a good choice. Being together with other women of Faith who worked so hard to put it together and then stepped back and let it happen: the planners were blessed with a successful outcome and we were blessed with the fruits of their labor. (Reminds me of our Cursillo Teams!)

God will never be outdone in His generosity.

Five Archdiocese of Newark Cursillistas to be Ordained

Our local Cursillo movement has the honor of having five Cursillistas from the Archdiocese of Newark being ordained to the permanent diaconate on Saturday, May 21 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark. A total of 35 men will be ordained that day.

Six years ago, the decision was made to extend the diaconate formation period from four to five years. The last time the Church of Newark ordained men to the permanent diaconate was June, 2005.

The first year in the formation process is reserved for discernment. The following four years are made up of classroom training at the Archdiocesan Center in Newark. While deacons can be assigned anywhere there is need, they typically serve in their home parish and assist the pastor, most often acting as a bridge between the clergy and the laity. The primary responsibility of the deacon is that of service to the community. That responsibility includes participating in the liturgical celebrations of baptisms, weddings, funerals and assisting in the celebration of the Mass through preaching.

Following are the Archdiocese of Newark Cursillistas who will be ordained to the order of Deacon in May, and their requested parish assignments:

Paul Carris

Corpus Christi, Hasbrouck Heights

Tim Kennedy

St. John the Apostle, Clark

Anthony Liguori

St. Elizabeth, Wyckoff

Jorge Montalvo

St. Mary of the Assumption, Elizabeth

Jorge Ochoa

St. Joseph, Lodi

horrible experience. In the story in *The Advocate* he shared that he sought professional guidance to help him come to terms with the trials he was facing. Eventually he spoke to Msgr. Lew Papera, his pastor and a Cursillista. Msgr. Lew suggested Paul make a Cursillo Weekend. Paul credited his Cursillo experience with helping to turn his life around saying, "That weekend changed my life. Before 9/11, I was content with where my life was going. After 9/11, I had this unrecognized emptiness that needed to be filled. I realized that I was looking for a relationship with God and I now had the tools to pursue that." His experience of Cursillo was nothing less than life changing.

Paul's embracing of Cursillo and the Cursillo method eventually lead him to discern a vocation in the diaconate. He began to explore his spirituality through the Cursillo precepts of Piety, Study and Action. "I started seeing God more in my everyday life. I began to recognize coincidences as 'God-instances'. The call to the permanent diaconate has reinforced my experiences of faith, which I hope I can share with those to whom I will be ministering."

Most assuredly, each of the rest of the Cursillista diaconate candidates have compelling stories to share about how they came to feel God calling them to serve in this holy capacity.

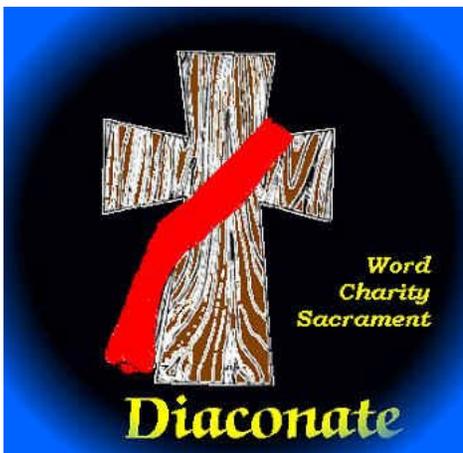
As a Cursillo family, we offer hearty congratulations and sincere thanks to all of the Cursillista diaconate candidates. We are blessed to have these five fine men of God to soon be serving the Archdiocese of Newark as ordained deacons among us.

A front-page article in the March 9, 2011 edition of *The Advocate*, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Newark, detailed the formation journey of this group. The article described the discernment process of Cursillista Paul Carris in his decision to enter the diaconate, as follows.

Paul experienced a life-altering event in that he was a victim of the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001. There is a dramatic recount of Paul's experience that day at <http://www.hasbrouck-heights.com/news01/wtc8.shtml>

In this recount, Judith Toppin, also a victim of the attacks, describes Paul's selfless efforts in saving her life just prior to the tower's collapse.

Paul struggled after living through that



Cursillo Community Comes to the Aid of One of Its Own

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!" Isaiah 58: 9

(Editor's note: The following is a story co-written by two members of the Sacred Heart, Haworth Cursillo community, Vinnie Shea and Pete (aka "Santa") Fusco. It details some of the Action steps the community took, and continues to take, to help their Cursillo brother, Dennis Christensen, in his time of need.)

What happens to a Cursillo Community when it learns one of its members has Leukemia? The first reaction is shock. The "holy cow" reaction. Followed by, "What can I do to help" The answer to the latter question is, "What can we as a community do to help?"

The collective response, by the Community, is to practice the Lenten theme of Fasting, Prayer and Alms-giving.

We prayed: No general took charge of what happened next. We agreed to a format of each member selecting a time of day to pray for, not only the stricken member but also for his family. Using the capability of the internet, 40 + Cursillistas and others joined the prayer chain. Many of the prayers were from other communities. Some names we recognized and others, while in the beginning were strangers, soon emerged into being the Body of Christ in prayer.

Some Cursillistas fasted from their normal day's activities of watching

TV, spending time browsing the internet and generally doing non-productive activities. Rather, to address the "What can we do to help?" They joined in prayer.

The Alms-giving segment of the Community's involvement included



Dennis Christensen

several donating blood. Others prepared and delivered meals to the family. After a long day at the hospital the meals were a welcomed gift.

Another form of Alms-giving drew people from outside the Cursillo Community. A member of our Men's Cursillo Group is also a member of the Norwood Knights of Columbus Council. He asked the Knights to support a Pancake Breakfast-fund raiser. The Knights gladly provided the ingredients and the workers to help cook and serve along with parishioners from our Church Community. Together they labored in an atmosphere of God's "people at work". The event raised close to \$5,000 dollars to help offset our brother's enormous medical expenses.

The Cursillo Community of Sacred Heart Parish in Haworth, including our Pastor Rev. Stephen Fichter (also a Cursillista and a member of the Norwood K of C Council), wishes to thank all of the people who joined hands and hearts in Fasting, Praying and Alms-giving. The Spirit of the Living God is continuing to bless Dennis Christensen and his family in their time of trial. He is blessing them with his presence of Love.

Get the latest news on events, Weekends, prayer requests, anything Cursillo...go to mycursillo.com

Men's 180th Cursillo Weekend Huge Success

The Men's 180th "You Are the Hands" Cursillo Weekend took flight on Thursday, March 10 at the Casa in Kearny. Sixteen Candidates signed up for this life-changing experience.



Led by Rector Rick Buff (on the right) and Warden Mat Glowski, (left above), the assembled team worked diligently in preparation for the Weekend. The team's hard work was apparent at the Closing. A beautiful Holy Spirit presence pervaded the Casa and the witnessing by the Candidates was an inspiration to all in attendance.

Spiritual Directors for the Men's 180th included Deacon Jack Gray,



Fr. John Gordon (left in photo) and Msgr. Paul Schetelick (on right). Gordon Roehrer was the

Music Minister. The Service Team, lead by Chris Sontag, was made up of men from the Paul Rota Memorial Group Reunion, (see photo below) which meets out of St. Joseph's in Oradell. Paul Rota had been a long-time member and leader of this Group Reunion. While he has since passed away, he continues to be remembered by his fellow groupers. Fr Anthony, also from St. Joseph's, Oradell, celebrated the Sponsor's Mass.



This Team's formation began in May, 2010. Many meetings and lots of hard work later the Team and Service Team were able to model the concepts embraced by Cursillistas to the Candidates over the course of the Weekend. The Cursillo community wishes to extend its congratulations and blessing to these sixteen brand new Candidates of the Men's 180th Cursillo. Our prayers are with you as you embark on your Fourth Day.



Still looking for Candidates...

for the Women's 163rd Cursillo coming right up, starting on Thursday, April 7, 2011, only about two weeks away. Please help us to make that Weekend happen by sending Women Candidates our way. Applications can be found at our website:
mycursillo.com

Cursillistas Invited to Spirituality Convocation

For almost 20 years, spiritual seekers in the Tri-State area have journeyed to the College of St. Elizabeth in Morristown, NJ to attend the annual Spirituality Convocation sponsored by its Center for Theological and Spiritual Development. For Cursillistas, Convocation provides a great formation opportunity – but those who have attended in the past agree that it also is a day to experience holiness and to share faith.

On Saturday, April 9, 2011, Convocation challenges us to break open the liturgical theme of the Fifth Sunday of Lent: “Do Not Fear to Hope: Live the Promise of the Resurrection.” We are invited to live more deeply that which we are called to believe—that new life comes from dying. The prophet Ezekiel promises it metaphorically—“I will put my spirit in you that you may live...I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord”.

Sometimes this is easier said than done—especially in times of worry and anguish over current realities

in our personal lives, in the church and in the world. Our belief is less than perfect. But we are in good company. Martha and Mary, our companions, struggled in that same way. Yet their belief was strengthened by Jesus’ presence, offering new life, though seemingly delayed, in the raising of their brother Lazarus.

Convocation begins with registration from 8 - 9:00 AM and ends with a Eucharistic celebration starting at 4:30 PM. The day features two keynote presentations, outstanding liturgical music and a selection of workshops to enrich personal spirituality and ministry.

Author Mitch Albom asks us to *Have a Little Faith* as he shares from his new book of the same name. Albom may be recognizable to you as the author of several popular books (*The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *One More Day*) and as a sports columnist for the *Detroit Free Press*. Lay ministers and authors Drs. Cath-

erine Cronin Carotta and Michael Carotta will present a second keynote to rejuvenate our spirits based on their new book, *Sustaining the Spirit: Callings, Commitments and Vocational Challenges*. The Carottas will also host workshop sessions focusing on parish ministry. Celebrated liturgical musician Rory Cooney and his wife Theresa Donohoo are special guests providing service for the Convocation and Liturgy and will also host the workshop, “Participation: Humanity, Suffering and Song.” Cooney’s wide body of music has been both published and recorded by GIA Publications, Oregon Catholic Press and World Library Publications.

There is a fee of \$45.00 that includes the program, refreshments upon arrival and a hot lunch. For more information on the program and to register, please visit www.cse.edu/center or call the Center at 1-973-290-4302.

Submitted by Rosemary Azzaro, St. Joseph’s Parish, East Rutherford, NJ

Donations

The Cursillo Movement gratefully welcomes your donations. They help potential Babe Chicks attend when they otherwise could not afford it. Send donations to our treasurer, Bill Dougherty, 26 Division Ave., Belleville, NJ 07109.

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