

CURSILLO NEWSLETTER OF THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE



THE EVANGELIZER



December 2016

New Website: www.BellevilleCursillo.org**FROM THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR** FR. GARY GUMMERSHEIMER

As we prepare to bring to a close our liturgical year (Feast of Christ the King) and begin a new one (First Sunday of Advent), we find the readings pointing us to the end times. These remind us of the frailty of human life; we all will, at some time, transition to a new way of living in a kingdom that will last forever.

Jesus made it very clear that the only one to know when life will end is the Father and he did not even share that information with the Son. So, what do we do during this time of waiting? That is **the important question of the Advent Season, how do we wait?** Recalling the anticipation of our Hebrew ancestors, waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the Church challenges us to use this Advent as a time to learn patience as we await the celebration of Christmas.

This is a tough call as we are already celebrating christmas (using small "c" as it has NOTHING to do with the birth of Christ). Advertisements are already using the theme of "Black Friday" the customary day after Thanksgiving when the christmas shopping season begins. Decorations, gift ideas and the like are already being pushed in stores and catalogs and it has begun this year BEFORE Thanksgiving! (As I write this I have in the last two weeks received about a dozen catalogs suggesting what I need to buy to give as christmas gifts.)

Why are we in such a hurry? A sad commentary is that even in Catholic realms, this rush to the season is a reality. The beauty of the Advent Season, is the call to be patient, to wait, to be a people of anticipation. We rush through our lives, often at break-neck speed, failing to pause and wait, to reflect and rejoice on the giftedness we have been given. What will we gain by being in such a hurry? Will the anticipated celebration be better because we got there so quickly? Or, will it have more meaning if a period of anticipation allows us to better understand the beauty of what we are preparing to celebrate? Please, take some time this Advent, to truly celebrate it, stepping back, slowing down and reflecting on the anticipated birth of our Savior and Redeemer.

One other thought... We have just finished one of the most contentious election seasons I can recall in my voting life. Pray that the partisanship that so defined this election cycle can and will be replaced with an attitude that gives rise to conciliation and compromise.

I pray that your Thanksgiving was a time to reflect and give thanks for family, friends and the blessings you have received.

May this Advent teach you the beauty of anticipation and waiting, and may the coming of the Word made flesh that dwelt among us, bless you with happiness and peace in the coming New Year.

With prayers and love,
De Colores,
Fr. Gary



FROM THE LAY DIRECTOR NICK LANG

Dear Sister and Brother Cursillistas,

The fall harvest is being gathered into the barns and silos. How are we doing as far as our harvest for the Lord? So far we have two women and one man candidate for the 2017 weekends. Christ is counting on you – His hands, feet and voice in your parishes and social environments. Let's get out there and make a new friend, be a true friend, and bring this friend into the loving arms of our Lord.

Your Secretariat is in need of volunteers to help with our reorganization efforts. We need people willing to be parish representatives in all parishes of the diocese. These people would be posting Cursillo info into their parish bulletins and stocking the parish information racks with pamphlets, updating our mailing list of known Cursillistas in their parish or area, and other work as necessary to broadly advertise Cursillo.

Having recently spent a day in full "Thanksgiving" to our God of Love, let us remember all those less fortunate than us, those without families, those serving us who cannot be with their families and those who are too sick to participate in this celebration.

May your Advent days be a complete blessing to you and all your loved ones.



PALANCA BOBBI SCHAEFER

Blessings to all our Cursillistas! How the times are changing! We have just emerged from a true crisis point in our country's history – a very divisive presidential campaign. It saw many taking extra time in prayer, bending knees to seek Our Lord's Face for intercession regarding our country's future. The power of prayer manifested itself yet again, showing us that, **YES, Our God does hear us!** He has not forsaken us; however, He may be leading us in a way unknown. Some are excited about this prospect and encouraged to be headed in a new direction; some are apprehensive and unsure that this is going to work for our good. And some are outright angry. This is where our job becomes clear...we are to focus on His Will...and **PRAY!** Our country needs *every* prayer from *every* person to be lifted up to God for His provision. And *this is only the beginning*...we must continue our efforts to seek Him in *daily* prayer, preferably through Our Lady's intercession in the Rosary. Padre Pio calls this our "*weapon of choice*" in times of spiritual battle. And that's where we are...in a battle for the life of our country! I have found a powerful resource to use, the Patriotic Rosary. It incorporates the government offices and our individual states with the power of this timeless prayer. I have information for any Cursillista who wishes to pursue this wonderful option and add it to their prayer "armory".

We have just finished the special month of November, being in prayer for those who have been called from us to Jesus. Let us always keep them in our remembrance, and lift up the families left behind, for them to feel God's comforting presence in this time of grief. Especially remember our dear Cursillista sister, Pat Cates, and all her family.

This joyous month of December we prepare for the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Amid all the celebrating, *don't forget your prayer time*. Again, prayer. How Mary must have prayed! Especially on that long, uncomfortable ride to Jerusalem on the back of a donkey while carrying her most Precious Child who was about to be born....Remember all the pregnant women and the unborn babies, that the way for them be life and peace!

At this blessed holiday season, here's a thought to help you focus:

Visualize your prayer time as a green Christmas tree – green being the color of hope – and each prayer you offer as an ornament on that tree. Here are what your ornaments could be:

- ✚ For our country and our government, that God blesses us with wise leadership that continues to preserve our freedoms;
- ✚ For our families and loved ones, to be under the Blood, especially those fallen away from their faith;
- ✚ For our servicemen and women, lives on the front lines, far from home, and their families praying for their safe return;
- ✚ For those who have lost their lives to the hand of violence, especially our police officers and military, and their families, that they can know the peace and justice that only comes from God;
- ✚ For the babies that never got to see this world because of abortion, and the women who made that choice, that both will know God's mercy;
- ✚ For our loved ones gone before us, that they may be celebrating in Heaven with Jesus;
- ✚ For our priests, seminarians, religious, from the Pope on down, that all may receive God's wisdom and protection as they follow their callings;
- ✚ For the sick and suffering, that they receive peace and healing from the Hands of the Christ Child;

- ✚ For the needy and homeless, forgotten by most, that God will work through us to supply their needs and bring them hope;
- ✚ For our Cursillo movement and all Cursillistas' intentions, especially for our upcoming Men's and Women's weekends in March 2017, for wisdom and guidance for the teams, and for open hearts for all the candidates God calls forth.

Now, notice the shape of your tree.....all your prayers point to the shining star at the very top – Jesus, our Way, our Truth and our Light! How beautiful will your tree look! And how pleasing will it be to Our Father in Heaven! What a wonderful present for His Newborn Son!!

I leave you with words from one of my favorite saints, Padre Pio....**"Pray, Hope...and Don't Worry!"**

PRAY, because.....Christ is counting on **YOU!**

De Colores and Merry Christmas!

Blessings always, Bobbi

★
For
God so
loved the
world He gave
His one and only
Son that whoever
believes in Him shall not
perish but have eternal life
John
3:16



PRECURSILLO LAURA VEACH

Make a Friend, Be a Friend, Bring a Friend to Christ. Do you have a friend who you want to bring to Christ through a Cursillo weekend but they have questions and you don't have the answers? Below are some of the frequently asked questions from candidates. Please note, these questions and answers are presented as a guide for you and should not to be shared in their entirety with your potential candidate.

While I hope that most of your questions are answered below, if you have others, please don't hesitate to contact me either by e-mail (laura.sings.4@gmail.com) or phone (Home: 618-233-3062 or Cell: 618-972-3062).

FAQs
(By Margie Reaka)

Getting Ready for the Weekend

Q. What are the dates for 2017? Will there be other weekends?

A. Each year in the spring the Belleville Diocese hosts two Cursillo weekends, one for men and one for women. The 2017 Women's Weekend is scheduled March 9th to 12th; Men's Weekend is scheduled March 16th to 19th.

Q. What do I need to bring to the weekend?

A. Please bring your own personal items such as soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, hairdryer, etc. Towels and bedding are provided. There will be plenty of food, snacks, and drinks as well.

Q. Do I have to share a room and/or bathroom with somebody else?

A. You will most likely share a sleeping room with another Cursillista. While the bedrooms do not have a private baths, there are plenty of bathrooms available and ample time for showering each morning or evening.

Q. How should I dress?

A. Comfortably! Jeans, sweats, tennis shoes, etc. are the norm.

Q. I can't be there the entire time from Thursday evening until Sunday evening, can I still attend?

A. Unfortunately no, this is a weekend community and is designed to build from the start on Thursday evening at dinner through Sunday evening dinner. Perhaps your candidate will be available for the Cursillo weekend the following year.

Q. What is the cost of the weekend?

A. The cost of the weekend is \$175; candidates are asked to give a \$50 deposit with their application. Please be assured that no one will be excluded from the weekend because the cost is beyond their means. In this case, please talk confidentially to the Precursillo Chairperson.

Q. Why can't I drive myself?

A. There are several reasons we provide a ride. Of course we don't want you to leave early (which is probably what you have heard), but riding to the weekend with your sponsor or friend provides an opportunity for last minute questions, and simply – you don't walk into the weekend alone. And when you leave you will most likely be very anxious to talk about your weekend, and the ride home with your sponsor is a great opportunity.

During the Weekend

Q. Is Cursillo a retreat?

A. Cursillo is not a retreat because it can only be made once in a lifetime. The Cursillo weekend is built on community and differs greatly from the individual solitude of a retreat. The word, Cursillo is a Spanish word meaning "little" or "short course" so the Cursillo weekend is "a short course in Christianity."

Q. What happens during the weekend? What should I expect?

A. You will listen to talks given by clergy and lay people during which you will take some notes just as you would take notes in a regular classroom. Each talk is followed by a discussion period. You will also pray together, celebrate the Eucharist and visit the Blessed Sacrament with other Cursillistas. And you will have opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Q. Do I have to share about my past?

A. No, you only share what you want to share.

Q. Where can I get more information about the Cursillo movement?

A. There is a lot of information available on the Internet. The Belleville Diocesan Cursillo Website (bellevillecursillo.org) and the National Cursillo Movement (cursillo.org) are two great sources.

After the Weekend

Q. After the weekend, how much of a time commitment do I have to make?

A. There is no specific time commitment because you make a Cursillo weekend. Cursillo is not an organization, it is a movement. The Holy Spirit will guide you to what time you feel you want to give. After the weekend some go full board and attend every event Cursillo offers, some go to a few, and some just make the weekend; but regardless, the weekend will change your life.

Q. What is "4th Day?"

A. The three-day Cursillo weekend is meant to be a beginning. The "after" activity of the Cursillo weekend is known as the "4th day," i.e., the balance of the Cursillista's life on earth. There are many opportunities through Ultreyas or group reunions to continue the growth in understanding and zeal within the Christian community.

Sponsors

Q. Where can I get an application, when should I send it, and to whom do I send it?

A. Applications are available at the Ultreyas, at www.bellevillecursillo.org, at the end of this newsletter, or by contacting the Precursillo Chairperson. Please be sure both the Applicant Form and the Sponsor Information Sheet is complete and mail them (with the deposit) to: Laura Veach, 4 Zinnia Drive, Belleville, IL 62221. The application deadline for the Women's Weekend is February 24th and the application deadline for the Men's Weekend is March 3rd.

(Continued on next page)

Q. What are the responsibilities of the sponsor?

A. To be a sponsor is a privilege and carries a serious Christian responsibility. It should be a deliberate act to bring your friend to Christ.

The sponsor should pray and sacrifice (Palanca) for their candidate before and during the Cursillo weekend. Sponsors are encouraged to attend the Precursillo Novena held at St. Joseph, Freeburg, each Sunday at 1:00 PM beginning January 8th through March 5th.

For the weekend, it is the sponsor's responsibility to ensure your candidate has transportation to and from the Ruma Center as well as attending the Sunday evening closing and dinner. And finally, sponsors are encouraged to write a letter to their candidate (this can be given to any team member prior to the start of the weekend).

Q. I don't have anyone to sponsor. How can I be a part of the Cursillo weekend?

A. Every 4th Day is encouraged to offer Palanca for the team and the candidates, attend the Precursillo Novena held at St. Joseph, Freeburg each Sunday at 1:00 PM beginning January 8th through March 5th and attend the closing and dinner on the Sunday evenings (Men's Weekend – March 19th and Women's Weekend – March 12th) at Ruma.



CURSILLO DE CURSILLO

The Cursillo of Owensboro, Kentucky is sponsoring a Cursillo de Cursillo
- December 4 through December 7, 2016 –

What is Cursillo de Cursillo (CdC)?

Cursillo de Cursillo is a course for Cursillistas who are searching for something beyond the Cursillo weekend.

Who should attend a Cursillo de Cursillo?

CdC is open to all Cursillistas especially those who wish they could make a Cursillo once again. The weekend is intended for those Cursillistas who are leaders in their Diocesan Cursillo Movement and for those who would like to better know the charisms of the Movement.

What is the format?

The Cursillo de Cursillo Weekend is similarly structured as a Cursillo Weekend. It begins on Thursday evening and concludes on Sunday evening. Like a Cursillo Weekend, participants stay at the facility the entire time.

The presenting team consists of five lay members and one priest or deacon. And like a Cursillo Weekend, there are rollos (13) and meditations (4). Participants are assigned to table groups and discussions are held after each rollo.

Cursillistas will need their *Pilgrim's Guide* for the Way of the Cross, Morning and Night prayers, and Examination of Conscience. (Extras are available for those who don't have one.) Mass is celebrated Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Where will it be held?

The Cursillo de Cursillo will be held at Mount St. Joseph Retreat Center, 8001 Cummings Road, Maple Mount, Kentucky 42356. There is room for about 100 participants.

What is the cost?

At the time this article was written the cost for the weekend is being finalized.

Where can I get additional information?

For more information and final costs, visit Cusillo-Owensboro.org or call Mary Hagan at 270-240-4778.



POSTCURSILLO TONY AND SHARON GUGLIOTTA

Dear Fellow 4th Day Cursillistas,

Happy fall season to everyone! Fall officially arrived on September 22, and we've had mostly mild fall temperatures again so far; the leaves have only recently changed colors, at least around the St. Louis area. Winter will be here before long. It is never too soon or too late to begin thinking about and praying for potential candidates for the next Cursillo weekends. By the time the next newsletter comes out, the weekends will be upon us. Let us be grateful and thankful for the Cursillo Movement and for the many people that we have met through Cursillo.

The annual Grand Ultreya was held at St. Clare Catholic Church in O'Fallon, IL on Saturday, October 22nd. It was a beautiful day and a wonderful afternoon shared together by all in attendance. We shared a bountiful potluck meal, participated in grouping and fellowship, and listened to an exciting witness talk given by Julie Bostick. In addition to learning about her and hearing about her Cursillo journey, we enjoyed her stories and anecdotes. Elsewhere in this issue, you can read an excerpt of Julie's talk. Many thanks to Julie Bostick for her witness talk that day, and for providing the excerpt for our newsletter. We were happy to see so many of you there, and to have a chance to catch up! Thank you to Bobbi Schaefer for handling the arrangements with the church staff and for all your assistance, thank you to the St. Clare Parish staff; especially Pat for meeting us and helping us get set up in advance that day. Thank you to all Cursillistas who came early and helped with final preparations and also to those who stayed afterward to pitch in with clean up. We really appreciate each one of you!

While having an opportunity to catch up at the Grand Ultreya, someone commented about it being nice when their name is remembered. We look forward to coming together whenever possible! It is important to me/us to pause and remember one another, and share a smile and kind word. It is truly so nice to see you, our brothers and sisters in Christ and that we have the chance to share our 4th Day journey. It is vital that we do. It sustains us to know we are not alone in the work we do for Christ on a daily basis. He is counting on us! The Holy Spirit encourages us in all things. In our daily lives when we recognize the opportunity, a genuine moment of fellowship between two strangers perhaps becomes the seed of friendship, of sponsorship. For both of us, when we were new parishioners at Cathedral Parish more than 15 years ago, we remember meeting new friends within just a few weeks. These new friends were eventually our Cursillo sponsors and our fellow Cursillistas. It began our 4th Day journey. Let us all strive to be open to and recognize the opportunities placed before us to make a friend, be a friend, and bring that friend to Christ.

Not only the rest of fall and then winter, but more importantly we look forward to Advent and a blessed Christmas season. In all the environments which we are a part of, we look for ways to reflect Christ in our interactions with others and be an example of patience, and of peace, mindful of the promise each new day holds for us who believe. There are many resources with appealing suggestions for activities both locally and regionally this year. A visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows is a favorite. A suggested website for Catholic Traditions for Advent and Christmas is www.catholiceducation.org.

Preparation is underway for the 2017 Men's and Women's Cursillo Weekends in Ruma, IL. The teams need everyone's support, as the nine-week Novena will begin at St. Joseph's Parish in Freeburg on Sunday, January 8, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. sharp. Let each of us offer palanca on behalf of each team member, and for men and women candidates to attend the Weekends. May the Holy Spirit guide the

formation of both teams and inspire the hearts of potential candidates to say “Yes!” to attending a Weekend.

Join with us as we are consistent in our daily prayers for each of you - for comfort, healing, peace, strength, thanksgiving, and for various silent intentions also. We are your 4th Day contact. If there is anything or any way in which we may assist you in your 4th Day journey, including finding a friendship group, please do not hesitate to contact us at (618) 239-9480 to leave us a short message or e-mail us at guggang@charter.net. We promise to call you back and help out however we are able. De Colores!

Peace be with you!

Tony and Sharon Gugliotta

Postcursillo Chair



PRAYER REQUESTS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need volunteers! What's involved? We need people who will accept prayer requests via email and then on the same day or the next day distribute the prayer request to all our cursillistas via email. Since group email is involved, some technical expertise on sending group emails is needed – or – someone with technical ability who is willing to learn.

If you are willing to accept this critically needed prayer service, please email Christine Leja at lejachristine@yahoo.com.

If you are unable to volunteer, please pray for volunteers to come forward!

May the Holy Spirit inspire the volunteers we need to come forward!

PRAYER REQUESTS EMAIL

Please remember to send all prayer requests to: CursilloRequestedPrayers@gmail.com

SCHOOL OF LEADERS TERRY KOSTEL**Our Life Defined**

Covetousness, as it is referred to in some Bible scripture, can cause us to make choices and decisions that we normally wouldn't make if we were to look at things through the eyes of common sense. But because of all of the subliminal marketing messages, our brains have been trained to think a certain way, and we make most choices without thinking much about them.

There's no doubt that we live in a materialistic world; it's all around us, no matter where we look. The world is in one awful mess. Our culture has created this mess...it's too busy, it's too noisy, there is too much going on in our lives. The reality is, it is affecting our lifestyle.

As a result, what's happening causes us to get distracted from our relationship with God to the point that the world itself starts to become our priority. After all, God made some pretty cool stuff for our enjoyment. Even He said it was all "very good," back in the Book of Genesis (1:31). The problem is that all too often the pleasures of this world have our full attention. For most people there's no room for anything else. This is the difficult situation in which Christianity now finds itself. The things of God are nowhere near the forefront of most people's minds.

It's important that we not let all that we desire distract us from our walk with God. As Matthew (16:26) says, "What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?" Not a single thing here on earth will profit us in lieu of securing our eternity in heaven.

The Gospel of Matthew (6:19-21) states, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be."

So many times we're not satisfied unless we're constantly getting bigger and better things. We buy homes that have more room than we know what to do with. Or we keep adding on and/or improving them so they feature the newest and best in amenities. And the cars we drive get more and more expensive, sporting the newest in luxuries, the fastest engines or the latest and greatest in technology.

With all that we have or can have, there seems to be this discontent in our lives. And as we become more discontent, we spend more time and effort pursuing things, instead of pursuing God. But God warns us about this in Deuteronomy (5:21), "Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife. Neither shall you desire your neighbor's house, or field, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

As Hebrews (13:5) tells us; "Let your life be free from love of money but be content with what you have, for He has said, I will never forsake you or abandon you."

Bottom line: How is your life defined? I was struck by this question as it was posed to us in a recent Homily. Something to meditate on - Is it defined by the 3 P's – Pride, Possessions, and Power, or by the 3 T's – Time, Talent, and Treasure?



PRECURSILLO NOVENA – STARTING AT 1 PM FROM JANUARY 8TH THROUGH MARCH 5TH

The nine week Novena will held at St. Joseph's Parish, Freeburg, IL, from Sunday, January 8, 2017, through Sunday, March 5, 2017. Please join in this palanca on behalf of each team member, for the men and women candidates to attend the Cursillo Weekends, and for the sponsors who are reaching out to **make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ!**



CURSILLO CANDIDATE AND SPONSOR FORMS

See information at end of newsletter or you can click on the forms below or check the home page of www.BellevilleCursillo.org or you can open the email attachments that came with The Evangelizer.

[Cursillo application](#)

[Sponsor form](#)



Excerpts from recent Grand Ultreya Witness Talk**From Julie Bostick's Witness Talk on October 22, 2016:**

Please help us to spend this Grand Ultreya day in the closest possible union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit dwelling within our souls. Please help us to share in the Love, Joy and Peace in the Most Blessed Trinity.

When I made my Cursillo weekend I had a special encounter with not only Jesus Christ but all three persons of the Blessed Trinity especially the Holy Spirit. I encountered something that was lacking in my life at that time: a loving Christian community. I belonged to a lot of communities but they weren't necessarily Christian even at my parish.

The world can really get us down and it is so amazing to me that in Cursillo I find so many Catholics on fire for their faith who live in this diocese. The reminder that I am on a journey to Christ really resonated with me but Christ is already the center of my life. Cursillo put into words what I have already been doing to grow closer to Christ, that is: focusing on piety, study and action. However, it is difficult to live piety, study, and action without support.

I grew astronomically that weekend because I received something that I had been missing: a Catholic support system. Prior to Cursillo I had been trying to share my new found faith with my family and friends at work, but it was difficult because they were not receptive and sometimes they could be hurtful. My sister challenged me and called me a "Bible Thumper." My kids and my husband thought I had gone off the deep end. My husband even told me that he didn't want to hear the words Holy Spirit come out of my mouth one more time.

My Cursillo friendship group provides the love, support, the listening ears and hearts, and especially the prayers I need to bolster my evangelization efforts. One question that is part of the friendship group has really changed my life: "When was I most aware of Christ's presence this week and why?" In order to answer this question every week you have to notice Christ!

I had lived my life up until then being so busy or so involved with everything else, I didn't notice all the little miracles that Christ had been working in my life through the grace of the Holy Spirit. At first I was like Elijah in the book of 1 Kings. Do you remember that story of Elijah going up Mount Horeb? God told Elijah to look for Him there because he was going to pass by, so Elijah looked for him in the mighty wind but God wasn't in the mighty wind. Elijah looked for God in the earthquake and the fire but He didn't find God there either. Elijah finally found God in the gentle whisper.

(Julie then shared a story about the 8th grade PSR and how they just needed someone to point the Holy Spirit out so that they could recognize Him.)

Jesus works little miracles in our lives every single day but if we don't pay attention we miss them. Jesus has sent us the Holy Spirit to be our advocate here on earth to transform us to be more like Christ and to help us evangelize. It was during this time that I realized that Jesus manifests Himself in our

world through the works of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Jesus promised us that the Holy Spirit would always be with us.

In John 14:16-18 Jesus says, “And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows Him. But you know Him, because He remains with you, and will be with you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”

Remember the Cursillo slogan: Make a friend, Be a friend, Bring your friend to Christ? My sister and some of my other family members were not practicing their faith. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit and the confidence I received from the Cursillo community and my small friendship group, I began to share my Holy Spirit stories with family & other friends. I would call them on the phone and just say, “Do you want to hear a great Holy Spirit story?” At first many of them would just roll their eyes at me. My son even asked me, “How do you know that isn’t just a coincidence? But then something fabulous began to happen.

First, it was when I noticed that my sister was actually listening to my story and that really got tears in my eyes! Then, my son got a genuine smile on his face and said, “Sure Mom, I would love to hear a Holy Spirit story.” Then one day my sister called me just to share a Holy Spirit story with me. Now my daughter loves to share her Holy Spirit stories with me as well.

I started sharing about my best friend Christ and Cursillo to anyone who would listen. It takes practice and it takes constant communication with the Holy Spirit in order to know what to say or what to do and especially to know what not to do. I know that because I have made many mistakes in evangelization, but I learned from them and they were great lessons in humility. One of the mistakes I made was to come on too strong, because that just pushes people away.

One evening my husband, Ralph said to me, “Julie when people want to roast marshmallows they are attracted to a nice warm and bright camp fire. They avoid blazing infernos. You are a blazing inferno. Tone it down.” But we can’t get better at something if we don’t practice and anything worth doing is worth practicing.

Not too long after I began my Cursillo Journey I changed jobs and started working for a corporation. Before I had always worked for a privately held company and the atmosphere was very different at the corporation. The management there was extremely hostile to faith of any kind. Money came first there before anything or anyone.

One of my coworkers came into my office one day waving a crucifix at me. He said in a really accusing and loud voice, “Did you put this in my office?” He held it and talked about it like it was something horrible. I told him I didn’t put it into his office and he said, “You are the only one that would do that.”

During that time every day I would go to a nearby parish that had a noon Mass. I would pray every day for courage and strength to work at this place. I had to keep the job, so I spent a lot of time praying and a lot of time sharing my frustration with my friendship group.

Cursillo is a Christian community like the Apostles and disciples had during the time right after Jesus ascended into heaven. The formula that Jesus has provided and has modeled for His Apostles and disciples is basically the formula that we learned on our Cursillo weekend: Make a friend, be a friend, and bring your friend to Christ.

Some of us have been and still are afraid to step out of our comfort zone to share Christ with others. God calls us out of our comfort zone because He wants us to grow in our faith. It is really difficult for us but the first step is the most difficult. Once you make that first step the rest is easier. Part of why we are afraid of evangelization is because in our head we make it complicated and it doesn't have to be complicated.

The apostles and disciples were ordinary human beings with flaws and challenges just as we are and I'm sure that is why Jesus chose them. Did you ever notice that God always chose the smallest & weakest? Look at David, look at the size of His chosen people. There are countless other examples... The apostles & disciples used the same simple method we learned on our weekend to bring people to Christ and look what they accomplished with no cell phones, social media, TV, or other electronic communication!

The best resources for evangelization are Scripture especially, the Acts of the disciples, the Pauline letters, Cursillo and *The Joy of the Gospel* by Pope Francis. In *Joy of the Gospel* by Pope Francis he says, "In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization..."

Pope Francis calls us to action in his statement, "Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. **Every** Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus; we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are **always** "missionary disciples."

A great way to be a missionary disciple and to bring people closer to Christ is through Cursillo. That is why we encourage people we meet, and all of our friends and family to make a Cursillo weekend.

How do we do that? We meet them where they are, but we don't leave them there. We take their hand and lovingly bring them closer to Christ. We pray for them. We do palanca for them. We talk to them about our best friend Jesus and we do the best we can to be the best version of ourselves so we are a good example. We invite them to Mass if they have fallen away. We remain open to the Holy Spirit and listen to His will. We trust that the Holy Spirit will help us plant the seeds we need to plant, and we remain patient because everything happens in God's time not ours. We may never get them to Cursillo but we always make a difference in their journey to Christ.

Once they agree to attend a Cursillo we begin to pray harder for them and add more palanca. We make sure we answer their questions and if we don't know the answers we do some research and get back with them. We drive them to their Cursillo weekend or make sure that they have a ride. We do palanca during the weekend and write them a letter and make sure others do as well. We attend the

Cursillo closing but our mission doesn't end there. We support them after the weekend by helping them join a friendship group. The first few times we invite them to the Ultreya and the Grand Ultreya, and we even offer to go with them so they aren't nervous their first time. We don't give up on friends. We continue to support them and pray for them.

If we grow in Christian community through piety, study, and action and we trust in the Holy Spirit to help us, we can be great at bringing people to Christ through Cursillo. People respond to God's Love, Mercy, and Joy. They are attracted to Christ's light shining through us. We just have to allow the Holy Spirit to continue to transform us so that no matter where we go, no matter what we say, no matter what we do, we will always be beacons of Christ.



John 1: 14

“And the Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us,
And we saw his glory,
the glory as of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth.”



Make a friend. Be a friend. Bring that friend to Christ!

Check out the Cursillo Diocese of Belleville website: www.BellevilleCursillo.org

Secretariat Meetings

Tuesday, January 31st, at 7 pm at St. Joseph Parish, Freeburg, IL

School of Leaders

The next School of Leaders is on Tuesday, December 13th, at 7:00 pm at St. Joseph's in Freeburg. Contact Terry Kostel (618) 234-8010.

Ultreyas

Belleville Area: Monthly on the second Friday at 7:30 pm in the Undercroft at St. Peter's Cathedral. (Entrance on W. Garfield St.) Contact Bob McCormack (618) 277-3709

New Athens Area: Monthly on the third Sunday at 10:15 am at St. Agatha's Parish Center in New Athens. This is immediately after the 9 am Mass. Contact Joe or Ann Haubrich (618) 475-2006

Murphysboro: Every other month on the last Sunday of the month at St. Andrew's school cafeteria. This is immediately after the 11 am Mass (approximately noon). Contact Joan Sherwood (618) 529-4351.

Friendship Groupings

Belleville Cursillo has begun an activity to create a list of all the Friendship Groupings in our diocese to make available to cursillistas. If you are part of a Friendship Group, please send to Christine Leja at lejachristine@yahoo.com the following information: Name of Friendship Group, meeting times, and location.

NEWSLETTERS ARE DELIVERED AT NO COST VIA EMAIL. PLEASE SEND YOUR CORRECT EMAIL ADDRESS TO CHRISTINE LEJA AT LEJACHRISTINE@YAHOO.COM .

TO RECEIVE ONE MAILED PRINT COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER, SEND \$5 WITH POST OFFICE ADDRESS TO CHRISTINE LEJA.



SECRETARIAT MEMBERS

Fr. Gary Gummersheimer, Spiritual Director

724 Mulberry St., Murphysboro, IL 62966; (618) 687-2012; pastor@stamboro.org

Deacon Ron Tiberi, Assistant Spiritual Director

1201 Lebanon Ave., Belleville, IL 62221; (618) 233-3500; rjtiberi@gmail.com

Nick Lang, Lay Director

7701 Baxter Dr., Belleville, IL 62223; (618) 213-6391; nplang415@gmail.com

Terry Kostel, School of Leaders

2607 Lebanon Ave., Belleville, IL 62221; (618) 234-8010; kostel_t@charter.net

Laura Veach, Precursillo

4 Zinnia Dr., Belleville, IL 62221; (618) 972-3062; laura.sings.4@gmail.com

Bob Emge, Cursillo

904 Reinhardt, New Athens, IL 62264; (618) 475-3438; tkedngjr@yahoo.com

Tony and Sharon Gugliotta, Postcursillo

2837 Smokehouse Way, Belleville, IL 62221; (618) 239-9480; guggang@charter.net

Julie Weber, Secretary

306 Barker, Smithton, IL 62285; (618) 444-2894; weber-julie@sbcglobal.net

Linda Bagsby, Treasurer

302 Cortner Dr., Smithton, IL 62285; (618) 960-1023; lbagsby@gmail.com

SECRETARIAT AD HOC COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Bobbi Schaefer, Publicity

1042 Stonybrook Dr., O'Fallon, IL 62269; (618) 632-0700;

bobbi.schaefer7mm@gmail.com

Bonnie Browy, Palanca

309 S. Charles St. Rear, Belleville, IL 62220; (618) 420-1814;

bonnie-jeffcity@hotmail.com

Christine Leja, Newsletter

2813 Fairway Dr., Belleville, IL 62220; (618) 222-2798; lejachristine@yahoo.com

Marie Caddell, Website

423 W. 10th St., Mt. Carmel, IL 62863; (618) 263-7124; marie.caddell@gmail.com

15 Fundamental Ideas of Being Good Sponsors

1. This is very elementary but the sponsor should be able to adequately answer this question: What is a Cursillo?
2. Know the Cursillo definition of a sponsor.
3. As a sponsor you should know the importance of the Cursillo Method.
4. Sponsors should know the purpose of the Cursillo Movement.
5. Sponsors should know the purpose of sponsoring.
6. Sponsors should know their responsibilities.
7. What constitutes personal contact?
8. Understand what is an authentic witness of life and its importance.
9. What is real Palanca and its mystery?
10. Know the need to study the environment which is basically, the “study of the person”.
11. Use a method to win the person over and bring them to Christ.
12. Know the criteria and purpose for selection of prospective candidates.
13. Know your friend’s life and family situations. The sponsor must be able to relay to the Precursillo Chairperson all pertinent required information about their candidate.
14. Have a plan to get your new Cursillista friend into a Group Reunion and bring your friend to Ultreya.
15. Prepare your friend/candidate for their Cursillo weekend.

Cursillo is a movement of the Catholic Church which by means of its own method makes it possible to live what is fundamental for being a Christian and to live it together as a community.

Cursillo’s ultimate purpose: We are to provide a backbone for Christian live in society by leaving the environment with the Gospel.

Cursillo’s immediate purpose: To provide a foundation so the person may live what is fundamental for being Christian.

Cursillo in Christianity



The start of your journey to grow in piety, study and action



Belleville Cursillo	2017 Weekend Date	Application Deadline
Women's Cursillo Weekend	March 9 - 12	February 24, 2017
Men's Cursillo Weekend	March 16 - 19	March 3, 2017

Name

Preferred name for your name tag

Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Type of
Employment

E-mail

Sponsor

Parish

Pastor

Age:

Emergency Contact:

Marital status:

Are you a Catholic, eligible to receive the Sacraments?

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Single

☐ Separated/divorced

☐ Married

☐ Widowed

Has the Cursillo Movement been explained to you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If married, is your spouse Catholic?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ na

Has the follow-up program of friendship grouping
and Ultreya been explained to you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Has/will your spouse made a Cursillo?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ na

Why do you want to make a Cursillo?

Please explain any condition that would require special attention such as diet, medication, or physical handicap.

Signed

Date

Return your completed application with a \$50 deposit (non-refundable) to your sponsor.

Checks are payable to "Cursillo in Christianity"

The total cost of the weekend is approximately \$175 (the balance can be paid on the weekend).

Please do not let the cost of the weekend prevent you from attending.

(You will receive a confirmation e-mail from the Precursillo chairperson with information about the weekend)

Belleville Cursillo website: www.bellevillecursillo.org

Questions? Contact Laura Veach, Pre-Cursillo Chairperson - 618.972.3062

Sponsor Guidelines



Speak to God about a person before speaking to a person about God



To be a Sponsor is a privilege, and as such, carries a serious Christian responsibility. Sponsoring a friend for the Cursillo is not a haphazard circumstance. It should be a deliberate act to bring Jesus Christ into the world. Therefore, you must know your candidate and consider the important items below.

GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATE SELECTION

- ✚ An adult Catholic (18+) who is able to receive the Sacraments and emotionally mature to understand the evangelical message and commit to it
- ✚ Able and willing to influence others in a Christian way
- ✚ Be free of unusual stress, e.g., recent loss of a loved one (out of respect for the candidate and in courtesy to other attendees)

CANDIDATE APPLICATION

- ✚ Do not be secretive. Answer honestly any questions the candidate has about the weekend or the movement (with the exception of palanca)
- ✚ Explain the Cursillo 4th Day (Group Reunion and Ultreya) to the candidate
- ✚ The cost of the weekend is approximately \$175. No one will be turned away because of finances. Inform the precursillo chairperson, in confidence, if your candidate is unable to pay for the weekend in full
- ✚ Complete the application with your candidate and mail this completed Sponsor Commitment, the Candidate Application, and a \$50 (non-refundable) deposit to the precursillo chairperson.
Note that Candidate Applications cannot be accepted without the submission of the Sponsor Commitment Form.
- ✚ Shortly after receipt of the application and Sponsor Commitment Form, the precursillo chairperson will e-mail the applicant a confirmation letter with further information about the weekend. You, as the sponsor will receive an e-mail as well. Check with your candidate that they received the e-mail and provide answers to any additional questions.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE CURSILLO WEEKEND

- ✚ Do palanca (pray and sacrifice) for your candidate
- ✚ Attend the Novena on Sundays from January 8 through March 5 at 1:00 PM, St. Joseph Freeburg
- ✚ Invite your candidate to attend a group reunion and Ultreya (prior to the weekend)

THE CURSILLO WEEKEND

- ✚ Insure your candidate has transportation to the Ruma Center. Candidates should not drive to the Cursillo site.
- ✚ Continue doing palanca for your candidate and all others attending the weekend
- ✚ Write a palanca letter to your candidate (indicate "Sponsor Letter" on the outside of the envelope) and give it to one of the team members prior to the start of the weekend
- ✚ Attend the Sunday evening closing and dinner, arriving at Ruma by 4:00 PM. Take your candidate home.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOLLOWING THE CURSILLO WEEKEND

- ✚ Keep in close contact with your candidate, continuing to show as much interest as you did prior to the Cursillo, and encouraging them to persevere in their 4th Day
- ✚ Help your candidate find a sharing group
- ✚ Attend the Cursillo Weekend Reunion with your candidate
- ✚ Accompany your candidate to Ultreya and School of Leaders

Sponsor Commitment Form

Complete the sponsor commitment form and mail with your candidate's completed application and \$50 deposit to: Laura Veach, 4 Zinnia Drive, Belleville, IL 62221.

Upon receipt, a letter will be sent to your candidate with information about the weekend. And you will receive a letter with a reminder about a Palanca letter for your candidate, their transportation to and from Ruma, and your support of your candidate beyond the 3-day weekend.

Note that Candidate Applications cannot be accepted without the submission of the Sponsor Commitment Form

Belleville Cursillo	2017 Weekend Date	Application Deadline
Women's Cursillo Weekend	March 9 - 12	February 24, 2017
Men's Cursillo Weekend	March 16 - 19	March 3, 2017

Candidate's name _____

How long have you know him/her? _____

Why do you feel this person is a good candidate?

Please complete the following information in regards to you, the sponsor.

Name _____

Address, City, State Zip _____

Home phone _____

Cell phone _____

E-mail _____

Parish _____

When and where did you start your Cursillo journey?

Are you presently a member of a friendship group? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you able to assist your candidate to become part of a friendship group? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you praying and sacrificing for your candidate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you explained post Cursillo to your candidate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you plan to attend the closing of the Cursillo weekend? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the candidate is married, have you discussed Cursillo with his/her spouse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you explained the \$50 deposit and total cost of the weekend? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(If your candidate cannot afford the weekend, please let us know so other resources may be sought to assist them.)

Belleville Cursillo website: www.bellevillecursillo.org

Questions? Contact Laura Veach, Pre-Cursillo Chairperson
laura.sings.4@gmail.com OR 618.972-3062