

The Cornerstone

July - September 2002

From Our Spiritual Advisor...

"WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?"

"So! What do you think of your Catholic Church now! "...Have you heard anything like this lately? Cynical words like these have recently been flung by those who consider themselves the "enlightened ones", those relatives and friends of ours who "threw off the shackles of Catholicism" and have led happier, freer lives!

As cursillistas, what are we to make of recent events? How should we respond? We humbly recall the truth: that as members of the mystical body of Christ, we belong to a divinely-instituted Church that is made up of frail and sinful human beings and we have a priesthood that is founded by the Son of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit-- but shared with frail and sinful men in every age. Sometimes, the sinful part of our membership, lay or clergy, appear in headlines and "Top Stories of the Day" and give others scandal. It always has been and always will be. From Judas Iscariot's treachery and Peter's denials of Jesus to the bishops and priests of our own day who have "sold out" in some way-- sexually, financially, spiritually. Sometimes sinners fall with a loud resounding thump-- and the enemies of the Church within earshot will make sure everyone knows!

To those folks who feel the Church is "too soft on sin" or that because of the sins of a very few, the whole Church and its clergy should be chucked or redesigned, perhaps a visit to Matthew 18:6 would be in order. It's a sobering part of the Gospel, to be sure, but there Jesus solemnly warns the apostles: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the sea". I would suggest, sisters and brothers, that before anyone starts fitting accused clergy with stone neck-ware, we should ALL take pause and draw in a deep breath and realize that these words of Our Lord were meant for everyone! Parents and grandparents, teachers and coaches, and any other adult mentors to the young should tremble at the thought of causing our youth to stumble (through our commission or omission). We adults should all tremble at the prospect of misleading our youth, counseling them wrongly, giving them the impression that duty to God, worship and moral living really aren't all that important-- and all of this of course being far, far more prevalent than authentic off-the-chart abuse!

In St. Paul's letter to the Romans 3:21 we read: "All have sinned and are deprived of the **glory** of God". This truth is at the heart of the Gospel. Humanity's condition after our fall from grace is one of sin, and from the catastrophe of sin there is only one rescuer: Jesus Christ. When a grave sin by a bishop or priest is proven in public, we are right to be scandalized. But let no one conclude that the Gospel preached by these men is false! The sacraments they celebrate are still real and necessary. The failure of these messengers is not a failure of The Message. But also at the heart of the Gospel is the universal call to holiness. All who are baptized into Christ "have become a new creation" (2 Cor 5:17) and are called to share the very holiness of God. All Christians are called to set aside every sinful or shameful behavior and to lay down one's life for the sake of the kingdom of God!

Where do we go from here? Where we've always gone... forward... perhaps with fewer numbers of committed laity and a more lean clergy, but forward we go! "Where else can we go?" asked Peter of Jesus when the disciple witnessed followers abandoning the Lord by the hundreds. "You alone have the words of everlasting life! "(see John 6:66-69).

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Friends in Christ: These may be lean years for Cursillo for the simple reason that we reflect the Church-- a Church that is under attack in some ways and misunderstood by many. Pray for the Church and for your many good priests who are suffering and continue to give their lives for Christ and for you. And when someone challenges you these days and asks you "how can you remain a Catholic even after all this?", do not be afraid to tell them why: There is only one true remedy for the sins of the world: the Lamb of God. And there is only one Church that can trace her priesthood back to the original apostles of the Lamb. This is the Church that offers from her altars the True Bread come down from heaven, the very Body and Blood of Christ!

As you work and fellowship and recreate in these summer months, please pray that YOU may do whatever you can to help others to see that-- and to believe that. Pray that through your holiness, formation and action, others may draw closer to the Eternal High Priest through His one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.



- Fr. Steve Nichols

A Note from Our Lay Director...

When we lived our weekend, there were several lessons that the team was trying to teach us. One of those was that we are a community based people. When Jesus sent out the apostles and disciples, he sent them in two's and three's. In communities of two or three, they supplied support and encouragement to one another as they carried the Gospel to their environments. **EVANGELIZATION!** They, as a community, listened and learned from Jesus. **FORMATION!** Together as community they received the Holy Spirit. **HOLINESS!** Do we, in our search for Holiness, need community less than the disciples? **NO!** So we small group. Do we, in our Formation, need community less than the disciples? **NO!** So we small group. Do we, in **EVANGELIZATION**, need community less than the disciples? **NO!** So we small group.

I lived my weekend about four years ago and have been small grouping for the last three years. Our small group revisits the feelings that we had as we completed our weekends. We provide support, encouragement, and strength for each other. In many ways, small grouping is like a mini-weekend.

The small group is the core around which Cursillo is built. I do not think it is possible to overstate the importance of small grouping to your 4th day.

May God bless and protect you in your 4th day,
Dan

Small Group... an important foundation to the Cursillo movement.

Are you participating in a Small Group?

Do you need assistance in forming a Small Group?

If you would like help, contact any member of your Ultreya

or the School of Leaders or mail your questions to The Cornerstone newsletter.

We will provide you with the help you need.

"We desire to live in Your friendship and grace. Do not permit us to be detached from You." (from The Group Reunion Theory & Practice, by Rev. Juan Capo, National Ultreya Publication)

From the Pre-Cursillo Section

"OUR SPONSORS WERE AND ARE THE GREATEST!"

I heard this accolade from a couple who had made their Cursillo two years ago. They didn't leave it at that. They expounded on the friendship and the caring, the leading them onward, their pre-Cursillo party where so much was explained, rides were arranged and then, the welcome at the Closing break-in and the very well executed follow up on themselves and all the other candidates ...a welcoming family feeling was sort of how they described it. They simply glowed talking about it. They still retain the friendships even though they've moved many states away, and they readily admit, they would not be where they are spiritually without the influence and guidance they received. In fact, one of the first things they did when they moved here was to look up and join an Ultreya. Now they're in a small group, as well - and well on their way of evangelizing in their community, through the library and the school system, as well as at church.

Will the candidates we have sponsored or plan to sponsor react this way? They will if we are following the guidelines in our Cursillo Leader's Manual and the Sponsor's Book.

It is the sponsor's and the Ultreya's role and purpose to look at the environments that these perspective candidates come from ... are they the center in these environments, do people listen to them, do their opinions carry weight and their activities influence those around them? These are people who should have a sense of responsibility and an ability to unite people ... they need to have a strength of character and a capacity for humility, and be leading Christian lives. Does this describe the candidates you are considering for Cursillo? They don't need to be the bosses or the managing types ... but have a quiet, friendly influence on those around them. They can be turned into leaders if they're given the right tools and information.

For yourself

- Know the goals of Cursillo.
- Know the candidate as well as possible, and do *palanca for them.
- Speak to God about the candidate.
- Give the candidate information about Cursillo (literature and the web site).
- Take responsibility for your candidate until he or she is fully involved in the nearest Ultreya and involved in a small group ... And keep checking to see if they are going on a regular basis. If not, ask why, offer rides, or help them discern why they are not going. You are the spark for them to continue learning more about God. Keep their fires going. Those that have fallen away may only need an encouraging word.



Your job is one of grave responsibility. You are starting them on a journey that will change their lives. It isn't fair to get them to the weekend and then let them sink or swim on their own ... You need to help them learn how to use the "new tools" they've received, and they need support from you and your fellow Cursillistas...to be encouraged to step out and up for Christ.

P.S. You can learn more about sponsoring and leadership roles by attending Renewal weekends and workshops when they happen, and the regional meetings twice a year. Keep your tools sharpened and ready too! "Been there and done that," is not enough.

Sue Driscoll, Pre-Cursillo Section

*palanca: prayer and sacrifice during the whole time you are choosing a candidate for possible Cursillo leadership roles; not just a hello note sent on the weekend. Try taking a walk with a very small pebble in your shoe and you'll get the idea.

From the Weekend Section

PERSONAL CONTACT

Of all the techniques that the Cursillo Movement employs, the most important technique is personal contact. As Cursillo leaders, we must make use of this tool on a one-to-one basis in the Precursillo, the three day weekend and the Postcursillo, especially at the Ultreya.

The personal encounters on a three day weekend, after each talk, during the meals and in our free time, are just a continuation of the work we began in the Precursillo when we selected and prepared the candidates. Personal contact doesn't end at the closing on Sunday evening; but must carry over into the Postcursillo, especially in the Ultreya. Such personal contact is basic to the whole Cursillo method. It is through this contact that we follow up the work started on the weekend. It is probably best described in the Evangelization Talk of the weekend: "Make a friend, be a friend, introduce your friend to Christ."

The technique of personal contact, which has some variations depending upon where and how it is done, follows the ascending curve seen in the normal process of a person growing through the Precursillo, the three days and the Postcursillo. What they are experiencing in this process is a "Conversion" and when using personal contact, we need to be alert to the conversion that is taking place in the life of the "newly converted" person.

A religious experience is a personal event. Realizing that, we can say that one who has experienced conversion will need help to continue in the process because conversion is not a single event, but an ongoing process. Thus, one of the main functions common to the Cursillo leaders in the Precursillo, the three days and the Postcursillo is their openness to personal dialogue and sharing with the Cursillistas, so that they may act as a renewing leaven.

This personal dialogue and sharing of the leader with the Cursillista must be done on the basis of friendship and sincerity through personal contact. The leader opens himself/herself up as a friend, without prying or probing the spiritual condition or the Cursillista.

There is always the danger of misusing the personal contact technique. We must always show respect for a person's personal freedom. If we do not recognize the signals to "back off," then we are clearly misusing the technique.

We also need to recognize the danger of not using the technique. Just use common sense, and in an orderly way. Not to use personal contact robs the Cursillo leader of an effective tool in the Precursillo, the three days and the Postcursillo.

Communication takes many forms; it contains information at several different levels. The communication process is more than spoken or written language. We also can, and do, use body language to communicate. Carefully used facial expressions are effective and can indicate positive or negative overtones.

There are people in our Christian community who need our contact and we need to make it.

Jim Groseclose for Phillis Swinyer, Weekend Section

NOTE: Some material contained above is from a hand-out on Personal Contact from a CLW workshop.



From the Post-Cursillo Section



SPONSORSHIP, A HOLY SERVICE

As has been reported; the dates for the Men's Cursillo weekend are October 3 - 6, and the Women's Cursillo weekend, October 17 - 20. Perhaps this would be a good time to remind everyone about what it means to be a sponsor.

Sponsoring someone is a commitment, actually, a holy service, if done properly. If you decide to become someone's sponsor, it is absolutely necessary to provide responsible sponsorship. The commitment to your friend starts months, and maybe even years, before the actual Cursillo weekend.

There are several steps, each equally important. The following is adapted from an article by Blaney Pridgen which appeared in the "Ultreya" magazine.

1. Pray. Be sure to talk to Christ about your friend before you talk to your friend about Christ.
2. Consult his/her parish priest. Would the priest consider this a point in your friend's life where Cursillo would be helpful? Is his/her priest willing to recommend this person?
3. Pray again.
4. Share and invite. Share what Cursillo has meant to you - your personal experience. If your friend is married, be sure to talk to his/her spouse as well. Avoid unnecessary secrecy about the weekend. Each weekend is unique, as the individuals involved with the weekend are unique. Make every effort to get the prospective candidate into a Group Reunion and to Ultreya for 2-6 months prior to the weekend. Always make the invitation in person, at your home or theirs, or over a meal.
5. Complete all paperwork for the application. Please remember to get spouse's paperwork ready, as well, and send both together.
6. Help where help is needed: Will the candidate need child care, pet care, or elder care? Are you called to help in the cost of the weekend?
7. Pray again and again. "Lord, open those doors and remove those obstacles. Prepare my candidate and help me support him/her all the way through the Fourth Day." Enlist others in prayer.
8. Follow up. Has the candidate received a postcard / letter with the weekend date? Will that work? What does he/she need? Don't assume because you or your candidate has not heard anything that he/she has been accepted. Weekends fill up fast; your candidate may have to wait for the next one.
9. Be watchful. Know that obstacles often befall the candidate a week or two prior to the weekend. Be prepared. Persevere in PRAYER and persist in helpfulness.
10. Palanca. Be sure to write a note explaining your palanca. Enlist personal palanca from the candidate's spouse, priest and members of their group reunion., parents or siblings (who have already made their weekend).
11. Drive your candidate to the weekend location.
12. Pray again and again and again. Consider a special fast or visits to the Blessed Sacrament for the weekend.
13. Attend Closing and drive your candidate home.

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14. **Personally escort** the new Cursillista to the next Ultreya and remind him/her of these meetings for a year thereafter.

15. Pray and if your candidate is not in a Group Reunion, work hard to secure one that is good for him/her.

16. Now **return to step one.**

Sponsorship is Christian friendship. It is really looking out for the spiritual well-being of your friend.

God's blessings to you all,
Judi Hussey, Post-Cursillo Section



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News from the School of Leaders

A Day of Reflection and Prayer - The School of Leaders invites all to a pilgrimage to Our Lady of LaSalette Shrine in Enfield, NH on June 29, 2002 at 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. The theme is "God Bless America." This will be in lieu of the annual picnic. All are welcome! Bring a bag lunch and dress according to weather conditions. The day is planned for outside activity. (Bring good walking shoes. The paths are paved, but there is a lot of walking.) There is a cafeteria and vending machines for drinks (snacks, and picnic tables are available. There is no cost for facility use. Donations are welcome for the Shrine itself. We have planned a Patriotic Rosary Cenacle, gathering at the Rosary and concluding at the Peace Pole. Following this, we will have lunch. After lunch, we will pray the Stations of the Cross. There will be time afterwards to look around at the rest of the sights, which include the LaSalette Garden, commemorating Our Lady's apparition at LaSalette, the Peace Walk which depicts the modern apostles of peace, the Holy Stairs between the 7th and 8th Stations of the Cross, and the Tomb and Resurrection(at the end of the Stations), which is an empty tomb with the statue of the Resurrected Christ above. There is also the Garden of St. Joseph, the Shrine and Reconciliation Chapels and a gift/book shop.

Directions: At the intersection of I-91 and I-89, go south on I-89. Take exit 17. At the end of the ramp, turn right and follow Rt. 4 toward Enfield, NH. Turn right on to Rt. 4. The Shrine is on the right. It is 5 miles from the interstate. We will meet at the smaller parking lot on the right. Hope to see you there! If you need further information, please call (802) 365-4012.

Update on Fall Cursillo Weekends - Presently, there are only 2 men and 2 women committed to going to the Cursillo weekends (October 3 -6 Men's Weekend, October 17 - 20 Women's Weekend). Please pray and do palanca for candidates and for the teams. We need 10 candidates for each Cursillo in order to consider having the weekend. If Cursillistas know of candidates that wish to go to the weekend, they should stress the urgency of getting the applications to Dan Daigler prior to the u 15th deadline.

CUrSillo Regional Reunion - At Mount St. Marie in Holyoke, MA on September 20-22. Registration will begin Friday evening from 7.00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The conclusion will be at 12 noon on Sunday. Please contact Dan Daigler for details at (802) 257-7395 or dad@ sover.net

Vermont Cursillo- Renewal Weekend - Mark your calendars! April 4 - April 6, 2003. The weekend will be held at En Gaddi in Phillipsburg, Quebec, Canada. More information to come in future issues of The Cornerstone.

School Of Leaders - The upcoming meetings are July 27th and August 4th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Bradford. We encourage any Cursillista to consider joining us. We welcome new members. Remember: Christ is counting on you!

Congratulations!

Vermont Cursillo would like to extend Congratulations to Father Joseph Lively on his retirement. We also want to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to Father Lively for all he has done over the past years in support of the Cursillo Movement. Father Lively has been highly instrumental in the initiation and development of the movement. Many thanks, Father, and may God bless you always.

Let Us Pray

- Prayers of thanksgiving are requested for Phillis Swinyer and Doris Allard for their continuing recovery. May they continue to grow stronger each day.
- Prayers are requested that all may have a safe and happy summer.
- Prayers of support are requested for Richard and Daisy Anderberg as they enter the Lay Ministry this fall.

June 11 - 14, 2002

Men - Palanca, c/o Meg Duarte, 605 Forest View Drive, Colonial Heights, VA 23834

Men - Palanca, c/o Mrs. Madai Ledesma, 5100 Sweetbriar Lane #331, Tyler, TX 75703

Men - Palanca, c/o Helen Calms, 711 40th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 95121

July 18 - 21, 2002

Men - Palanca, c/o Irma Sherry, 14051 Charloma Drive, Tustin, CA 92780

Women - Palanca, c/o Helen Calms, 711 40th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 95121

July 25 - 28, 2002

Women - Palanca, c/o Irma Sherry, 14051 Charloma Drive, Tustin, CA 92780

August 1 - 4, 2002

Women - Palanca, c/o Jerri Hudson, 1027 Smoke Tree Lane, Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Women - Palanca, c/o Mrs. Edie Lopez, 418 Winnipeg Avenue, Brownsville, TX 78526

August 8 - 11, 2002

Women - Palanca, c/o Charlene Bearden, 319 Indian Gate Circle, Ridgeland, MS 39157

August 15 - 18, 2002

Women - Palanca, c/o St. Paul Cursillo Center, English Palanca Coordin., 4000 Belk, Houston, TX 77087

Men - Palanca, c/o Carmen Golias, Cursillos of Christianity, P.O. Box 5152, San Antonio, TX 78201

August 22 - 25, 2002

Men - Palanca, c/o Tommy Lamas, 18 Peachtree Lane, Madison, MS 39110

Women - Palanca, c/o MCC, Dioceses de Oakland, 1336 Pine Avenue, San Pablo, CA 94806

New Beginnings

This is the time of year when we look forward to new growth. Renewal, fresh beginnings, life

Our spiritual lives are gifts from God. Is it possible that our Faith life has grown hard and impenetrable, like a garden that becomes packed down and hard through the winter by the heavy snow and ice? If this is so, maybe it's time to identify our heavy ice and snow. Are these family conflicts, bad relationships, doubt or the influences of our modern world? If we look deeper, might we find a weak spiritual life? This weakness will affect the strength we have facing these challenges.

Just as the hard garden soil has to be cut through and turned over, so does our spiritual life. In order to promote new growth, we have to work the ground. Remove old debris and rocks. It would be physically easier to talk ourselves out of garden work. After all, there usually is a pretty decent farmer's market set up every summer. So, too, it would be far easier to avoid looking deeper into our spiritual lives. But remember, Faith is a process, and in order to grow, it requires action.

Till the soil of your spiritual life. Take the heavy burdens to God. He will remove them. He will turn over the hard ground of our lives with His love. He will soften the hard packed down places with His warmth and comfort.

He doesn't work alone, though. This is where we must roll up our sleeves. As a gardener makes plans for spring planting, we also must plan what we are to sow.

Plan to really invest time in this process. Begin by looking at our prayer life. Do we need to hoe out more time to be with our God? Is there time set aside in the day just for Him? If so, would it be possible to set aside another patch of time, just for Him? Ask the Holy Spirit. I'll bet He can show you that little extra space.

How about adding to your plan cultivating friendships. It doesn't take much extra work. Just keep that plan always before you. Plan to really be present to any and all you come in contact with. Listen - sincerely- give them the gift of yourself. You may discover that rather than find it confining, it may be pleasantly freeing. It feels good to give. The only thing that makes life worth living is loving - love that is evidenced by our actions.

As we need tools to work our gardens, we also need **tools to work our spiritual** gardens. A sacrament is a gift from God. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, build up the Body of Christ and finally, to worship God." (#1123) These most precious tools include, for our asking, the Holy Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and, don't forget, for those who are married, the Sacrament of Matrimony - all special tools that nourish and strengthen the soul. Further assisting devices are the Catechism of the Catholic Church and books and videos about the lives of the saints. We must make an effort to surround ourselves with people of our faith community, those who share our love for God, and encourage us in our struggles, like our Small Group Reunions and Ultreyas. Our participation also encourages and strengthens others in these groups.

Recognize that we are being tested these days and arm yourselves accordingly. Pray, especially the Rosary, try to go to daily Mass, read Scripture. No gardener works without the protection of sunscreen and bug spray.

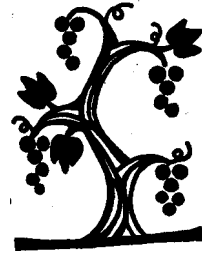
So here is the question: Are we too lazy to look intently into our spiritual lives and change? Are we closed to the idea of new growth because it takes work? Nothing chokes out growth like the weeds of disinterest. Just as gardening is an ongoing chore, so, too, is the cultivation of our spiritual garden. Scripture challenges us "...you will be like a watered garden, like a flowing spring whose water never runs dry." (Isaiah 58:11) Or will we allow it to run dry?

Your sister in Christ,
Judi Hussey

Ultreya News

Ultreya Sharing: Consider that it may not be what is said TO YOU, but rather, what YOU SAY that might be just what someone needs to hear.

- Bellows Falls Area:** 2nd Tuesday of each month
July 9 7:00 p.m. St. Charles Parish Hall
August 13 Same time and place
September 10 Same time and place
- Enosburg Area:** 2nd Monday of each month
July 8 7:30 p.m. Call Ultreya Committee for place
August |
September 9 7:30 p.m. Call Ultreya Committee for place
- Rutland Area:** 3rd Tuesday of each month
July 16 7:30 p.m. St. Alphonsus Parish Hall
August 20 Same time and place
September 17 Same time and place



Please pray for the repose of the soul of Floyd Thayer, brother of Phillis Swinyer and Viola Whittemore. May the Lord bring the family peace and consolation in their time of grief.

- St. Albans Area:**
July No Ultreya. Please feel free to attend one of the other area Ultreyas.
August Annual cook-out/picnic/Ultreya. Call Ultreya Committee for details.
September 4 7:00 p.m. St. Mary's Parish Hall

Our sympathy is extended to the family of Mary Benoure, long time Cursillista, cousin of Jean Groseclose. Mary passed away on May 16, 2002.

Prayers are requested for Warren Wills who is very ill. He is the father of Tim Wills.

Also, please keep Vance Bacon, father of Kathy Bessette, in your prayers as he recovers from heart surgery.

- St. Jobnsbury Area:** 4th Tuesday of each month
July 23 Call Ultreya Committee for time and place
August 27 Call Ultreya Committee for time and place
September 24 Call Ultreya Committee for time and place
- Southeastern Area:** 3rd Wednesday of each month
July 17 Call Ultreya Committee for time and place
August 21 Call Ultreya Committee for time and place
September 18 Call Ultreya Committee for time and place
- Troy Area:** 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month
July 10 & 24 7:30 p.m. Sacred Heart Parish Hall
August 14 & 28 Same time and place
September *11 & 25 *Check with Ultreya Committee (9/25 - Same time and place)

Prayers are requested for Cheryl Clarke as she enters the Lay Ministry Program in the fall.

Also, please pray for Joe Poirier, husband of Viola Poirier, as he continues his recovery.

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"The only time one may say
he has never failed
is when he has never tried,
and that itself
is the greatest of all failures."
Reverend Juan Capo-
(from *The Group Reunion Theory & Practice*)

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