



e-ULTREYA magazine

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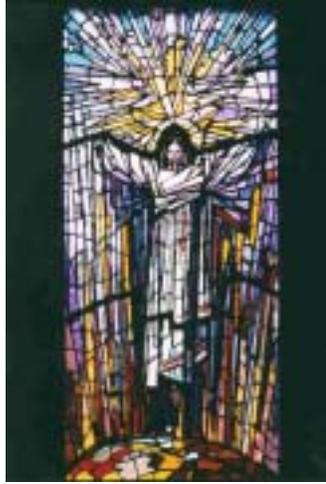
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An Internet Magazine of Cursillo Witnesses

Dallas, Texas

National Cursillo Center

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Sharing Group Reunion Guides Cursillo Leader's Life

When I lived my Cursillo in March 1974, I was seeking to understand more fully where and how God was calling me to serve His people. During my Cursillo I discovered that through the grace of my baptism, I was capable of evangelizing my friends by being Christian in my surroundings wherever I found myself.

Since my Cursillo, God has blessed me with unmerited grace; constant support, love, and guidance of a permanent group reunion. During these past 31 years, I have discovered a more profound and living God in myself and in others. Sharing with my group reunion is what is fundamental for being Christian and what each member of my group strives for to have a more grounded faith, hope and loving attitude toward ourselves, God and others. Through this friendship group reunion we have discovered how much God loves us and others.

Even during the most difficult times, it has been through this group of "amigos" that I have been properly and lovingly guided to continually make the most prudent and effective decisions in everything that I have done in my life. It is through this group reunion that I discovered how to better contemplate and discern what God is calling me to be and what He is calling me to do to build His Kingdom. Over the years, my group has tried, through faith and reason, to seek out the specific nature of God's will for us, and in doing so we have developed and put into action, apostolic plans designed to help bring about the Kingdom. Sometimes, by the grace of God, we were successful. But more often than not, because of our own limitations and brokenness, we missed the mark. There were times, also, as with any long-term relationship, when we had disagreements on philosophy, psychology, religion, theology, and social events, only to discover that our individual uniqueness as images of God's love allowed us the freedom and confidence to express our views openly and with sincerity.

We have discovered how much God loves us

In my former employment, I lived in a very difficult environment. With the support of my group of friends, I learned to evangelize those who were about to go to prison. I found the grace to act as a model for my fellow badge and gun carriers to help them learn balance in life. I found the strength to offer baptism to a man I was forced to shoot and who might be dead before help arrived. My strength came from our Lord Jesus Christ and I counted on Him present in a special way in my group of friends.

Through group reunion, I have grown to understand my limitations in order to discover a better person within me, a better understanding of humanity and of the value of surrendering to the Divine will of God who enables me to better understand the limitations of my brothers and to accept them with compassion and love.

It is through this constancy of friendship that I have discovered my present vocation of service to the people of God. My permanent reunion brothers were, and continue to be, vitally important friends who have assisted me to better serve the National Cursillo Movement with a better conviction and normality that allows God's will to be done.

There are probably no words that can ever fully express how I feel about the loving relationship that I share with the members of my permanent group reunion. I do know this, though: I believe that upon our departure from this world, we will continue to share our love for each other and for God's people, throughout all of eternity.

Ultreya!

Victor Lugo
National Cursillo Office - Dallas, Texas

Cursillo Support Helps Endure Loss

The Cursillo tripod has kept my life in balance, especially during these past few months of pregnancy. And my fourth day has been full of spiritual surprises.

A few weeks ago, I had a scare. I thought I might lose my baby, so I went to daily mass and began to pray the rosary twice a day. I have been attempting to stay holy.

My formation has been supported through reading the Catholic publication "Magnificat," where I meditate daily and attempt to apply the spiritual messages to my husband, co-workers, and even that little miracle in my womb. As a mother-in-waiting, I have started writing letters to my infant each day. I want my children to know that they are a special a gift from God. I want my children to see Jesus in others, as I do.

I was blessed to attend Cursillo only two months before my mother died. With prayers and support from the New York Cursillo community, my struggle of losing a parent was made more tolerable. My mother (a Cursillista) was a model of a true Catholic. She never judged others and always bent over backwards for everyone. She loved all of her nine children unconditionally. Her role in the New York Cursillo community was special gift to our family, one that I will cherish my entire life.

God's little miracles of life have brought me closer to Jesus. Even if I had lost my child, I know that Jesus loves my family even more than I could have possibly imagined.

De Colores!
Vanessa Defino

Group Reunion Inspires Sharing "Down Under"

While on a month's vacation in Australia, I was looking forward to reuniting with my first cousins after more than 50 years. I prayed and asked God to make me His instrument with my extended family.

Before we returned from the trip, I was invited by my cousin's wife to meet her prayer group. I had just met her for the first time and really didn't know too much about her. I told her how glad I was that she was involved in her

church. She didn't know much about me either, but she was happy when I excitedly said yes. I really felt God calling me to experience this, and I never imagined that I would be going to a prayer meeting. But God had His plans.

I felt very welcomed when we arrived and comfortably joined in the singing and prayer. Then, to my surprise, the leader formally introduced me as their "guest" and announced that the second half of the meeting would be given to me, as their guest speaker. I was prepared to briefly introduce myself, but not to give a testimony. I really didn't know why I was asked. Was it because I was a visitor? "Well, God, this is not funny", I thought to myself.

At first, I felt frozen and a little uneasy, and a flash of fear passed through me. But then, as I looked around at all the smiling faces, I felt God's overwhelming love. It was a small group of about eight persons. God was very gentle -- it could have been a big room filled with people. The Holy Spirit was alive as well, especially after our singing and prayers.

If I hadn't been grouping regularly, I would not have been open to His call to witness. I "let go" and let God take over as I humbly shared myself, my Cursillo experience, and the other ministries I am involved in for the love of God.

When we say yes to Jesus, we must realize that He can call on us at any time, when we least expect it. For me, He usually asks me to do things for Him that I am not too comfortable doing. And thanks to my weekly group reunion, I have the courage to respond.

Christ is counting on me. "And I on Him."

Yolanda McCargar
Orange, California

Being a Friend Helps Build Cursillo Community

When a friend asked me to live a Cursillo, I didn't know anyone who had lived a weekend at my parish. I later learned a few had but they were not involved in the movement. After my weekend, and then my wife's, we began to talk about Cursillo with people in the parish. We looked for leaders and tried to find someone to attend each weekend. It was a slow process, but we persisted and got more involved with the movement. We joined the secretariat, and worked on teams. Always we sought to "make a friend, be a friend and bring a friend to Christ" for each Cursillo weekend.

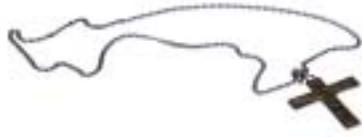
Things turned around when we really took "Be a friend" seriously. Our parish was building a new church and hall, so my wife set out to start a coffee time after Sunday Masses. Her only goal was fellowship. It wasn't long before parishoners began coming to coffee in decent numbers.

Then, we also started a Vacation Bible School during the summer. My wife did all the planning, and I was the goofy one in front of the kids singing songs and teaching them about Jesus. When people asked what Vacation Bible School was, we told them it was Cursillo for kids. And then we would explain about the movement.

As fellowship grew, so did the number of parishoners living Cursillo weekends. It was like a snowball rolling down hill. At the last women's weekend, 10 women from our parish attended. We now also have a monthly ultreya at our parish and we work with our Cursillistas to find them group reunions.

Through all of this, my wife and I have discovered that Cursillo is a process. The longer the process goes on, the more we find we can do to help the movement grow.

George Leite
Holy Family of Nazareth, Leominster, MA



How to submit a Witness article to *e-Ultreya Magazine*

Witness articles should focus on how the Cursillo method has influenced your life. Articles involving Piety, Study, Action or your Fourth Day are best, and should be no more than five or six paragraphs in length. *e-Ultreya Magazine* reserves the right to edit submissions for content and clarity. Please include your name and address on your submissions.

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