

The Cursillo

*A Method to
Find,
Form,
Sustain
and
Link
Lay Leadership for Christ
and His Church.*

*One Means of Supporting
Christian Community.*

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Bishop James Conley (Bishop of Lincoln)

February 8, 2014

“The Cursillo Movement in the Diocese of Lincoln has my blessing and full support. For many, making a Cursillo retreat can be a trigger moment for a deeper conversion of life and a greater commitment to discipleship in the Lord. The Church is gifted with disciples from the Cursillo Movement who are true evangelists. As Pope Francis stated in *Evangelii Gaudium*, “Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God’s presence” (EG 259). Cursillo retreats provide the opportunity for a heart to heart encounter with Christ, whose abundant love and mercy is transformative. Once transformed by a deep encounter with Christ, those involved in the Cursillo movement persevere in this grace through a life of prayer, regular participation in the Sacraments, and fidelity to the “fourth day.” The ready support of fellow Cursillo members and attendance at community reunions are a tremendous help as well. May God grant the Diocese of Lincoln many fruitful Cursillos and a great harvest of souls who have their hearts set on our Lord Jesus!”

Bishop Fabian Bruskwitz (Bishop Emeritus of Lincoln)

April 8, 2003 Pastoral Bulletin to Diocesan Priests

“Cursillo began in Spain in the 1940’s, and has since spread throughout the world (it was also the catalyst for such movements as Marriage Encounter, Teens Encounter Christ (TEC), Christians Encounter Christ, Residents Encounter Christ, and KAIROS, each of which addressed the needs of a specific group.) Through regular reflection on personal growth in the areas of holiness, formation, and evangelization, the Cursillo Movement offers Catholics an authentic means of helping the Church fulfill her mission of bringing the Gospel to the world.

“The Cursillo Movement first came to the Lincoln Diocese in 1965, and has since continued in its efforts to bear fruit in the spiritual lives of those involved, as well as in the environments these persons were sent by God to Christianize (family,

neighborhood, parish, work). Cursillo is a solidly authentic method of deepening a relationship with Christ, a means of putting on the mind of Christ. It is one way to assist Catholics to teach others to do the same.

“The Cursillo Movement is strongly recommended for its authenticity in promoting holiness, formation and evangelization in the spiritual lives of those who faithfully participate and persevere in living the Cursillo Method, especially to the leaders in every environment within the Diocese. The Lincoln Diocese Cursillo Movement enjoys the full endorsement and support of the Bishop and of Pope John Paul II who publicly thanked the Lord for all He has done and never ceases to do in the Church through Cursillo.”

Pope Francis (formerly Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio)

June 13, 2011 Letter to the Cursillistas of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires

My dear Cursillistas:

“‘The good seed are the children of the kingdom.’ (Mt. 13:38)

“As we approach the celebration of the feast of Saint Paul, your patron and model of how to live “de colores”, we give thanks to God for all the fruits that the Cursillos in Christianity Movement has generously given the Church.

“Your service of proclaiming Christ by being his witnesses in your everyday environments, is an embodiment, a concrete renewal of the Baptism that we have received in Him and makes you disciples and missionaries of the Word, as this was expressed in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: “Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself” (Lumen Gentium no. 33).

“I write to you conscious of the challenge that today’s society presents to the enculturation of the Gospel; but I trust that your audacity and apostolic fervor - born of a personal encounter with self and with Christ - will lead you to make history for the good of all. So that, many brothers and sisters, marginalized or not, who live on the fringe may feel embraced by the love of Jesus.

“To be a pilgrim in our City means not becoming comfortable, but to be open to life and to pay attention to what is happening in our heart - like a good Samaritan confronted with the difficult circumstances of so many brothers and sisters.

“It is necessary that the Cursillos in Christianity Movement, through the participation of everyone, continue its journey of pastoral conversion as proposed at Aparecida (Cf. 5th General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, “Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ”)

“As Cursillistas living through difficult times you need to ask God for the Grace to have many candidates, to have an ongoing precursillo, so as not to fall into the hopelessness that paralyzes and causes anguish. The gift of the Kerigma that you received in your Cursillo sends you on mission as proposed by the tripod of piety, study and action.

“As an Archdiocesan Church, we need the unity of all in Christ, so that He, and only He may reign in our hearts and we may thus be able to recognize him like the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

“In thanking you for your journey as a Cursillista, I ask you not to stop renewing your apostolic zeal and dedication and that of your brothers and sisters in your Group Reunion before Jesus in the Eucharist.

“Today more than ever we need that your nearness in the environments be a source of light and joy for so many brothers and sisters who do not yet know that God is a Father who loves them tenderly.

“Today more than ever we need your presence so that many families may encounter the transcendent love of Christ - a new and greater dimension of human love.

“Today more than ever we need you and your witness at the Ultreyas, so as to go “onward”, to go beyond, in the proclamation and experience of the Kerigma.

“I ask that you pray for me. May Jesus bless you and Our Lady, Mother of Divine Grace, keep you.”

Affectionately, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio SJ,
Archbishop of Buenos Aires

Saint Pope John Paul II

July 29, 2000 Jubilee Address to Cursillistas, Rome

“Your presence here, so varied and festive, shows that the tiny seed planted in Spain more than 50 years ago has become a great tree laden with fruits of the Spirit. Indeed, it continues to be a successful response to the question asked by my venerable Predecessor Pope Paul VI at the first world Ultreya in Rome: ‘Can the Gospel still win over the mature person ... in urban and rural cultures?’ You transform the world by becoming new men and women. I am therefore delighted to join in your thanksgiving to the Lord for all He has done and never ceases to do in the Church through the Cursillos de Cristiandad. The theme of this world Ultreya – *Evangelizing the Milieus of the Third Millennium: A ‘Challenge’ for the Cursillos de Cristiandad* – demonstrates your efforts to repropose the experience of Christ to the men and women of the 21st century with new means and enthusiasm. This has become ever more urgent, since whole countries and nations, where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing and capable of fostering a viable and working community of faith, are now put to a hard test ... as a result of the constant spread of indifference to religion, of secularism and atheism.”

“In view of this situation which challenges believers to remake the Christian fabric of the ecclesial community, the Cursillo method aims at helping to transform in a Christian way the milieu where people live and work through the involvement of ‘new men and women’ who have become such from their encounter with Christ. This is the goal of the three-day ‘little course’ on Christianity, in which a team of priests and lay people, supported by the prayer and sacrifices of the movement’s other members, communicate the fundamental truths of the Christian faith in an especially ‘living’ way. When presented in this way, the message of Christ almost always opens participants in a Cursillo to the gift of conversion and to a deeper awareness of the Baptism they have received and of their own mission in the Church. They feel called to be the prophetic ‘leaven’ which

is kneaded into the dough so that the whole mass will rise to be the ‘salt of the earth’ and the ‘light of the world’ to proclaim to everyone they meet that only in Jesus Christ is there salvation and that it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear.”

“... This is your apostolate, carried out in constant harmony with the Church, to show the ‘strength of communion’ which is at once the style and the very essence of the People of God. As you face the various forms of individualism which fragment and divide your evangelizing ability and resources, join your missionary forces with those of the various ecclesiastical groups raised up by the Spirit in the Church of our time. Endeavor to restore the beauty of the first Christian communities, which prompted pagans to say with admiration: ‘See how they love one another!’ And always be docile to the directives of the Magisterium. No charism, in fact, dispenses you from referring and submitting to the Pastors of the Church, whose discernment is a guarantee of fidelity for the charism, itself. May the Jubilee celebration instill in all of you a renewed fidelity to your original inspiration and a firmer ecclesial communion. Many people are looking to you for the light of faith.”

“... During the days of a Cursillo, the words of [a] popular Spanish song help the participants to reflect on the multifaceted beauty of creation. In encountering Christ, you have learned to look with new eyes at others and at nature, at everyday events and at life in general. You have experienced that true happiness is found in following the Lord. This personal and community experience must be passed on to others. Many men and women of our time, who unfortunately turn away from God, expect from you the light of faith that will help them rediscover the colors of life and the happiness of feeling loved by God.”

Pope John Paul II
July 29, 2000 Jubilee Address to Cursillistas, Rome

Saint Pope Paul VI

• ***May 28, 1966 Address to First World Ultreya, Rome***

“Cursillos de Cristiandad, that is the word, purified through experience, affirmed by its fruits, that today travels with citizenship papers throughout the world ...”

“Whether some methods become obsolete, whether new manifestations of the Spirit arise, the permanent task of the layman will continue to be the infusion of Christianity into life through the encounter and personal friendship with God and in communion with his brothers. The layman, upon forming himself in Christianity, reforms his mentality and conforms his life to Christ’s image by means of faith, hope and charity; acting with complete responsibility, he transforms the temporal structures in which he is immersed; guided in his action by the glance of Christ, he continually tries to remake the world according to God’s plan and design ..”

“We know that in your plan of spirituality and apostolate in the Cursillo Movement the ‘Sensus Ecclesiae’ (mind of the Church) is the guiding light that orients you ...”

“Beloved sons and daughters: Our soul is so oppressed by the vision of the evils which afflict the Church and mankind. But permit us to express our overwhelming joy that at this moment floods our soul before the immense

chorus of your manly faith in Christ, your fidelity to the Church, your fervent loyalty to this Chair of Peter and to the ministry of the episcopal hierarchy.”

“Cursillos de Cristiandad! Christ, the Church, the Pope, are counting on you!”

• ***Dec. 8, 1975 Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World***

“TAKE A CHRISTIAN or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one.”

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