

# CURSILLO NEWSLETTER

Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska

December 2024

## Calendar of Events



January 11, 2025 -- **SOL - 9:00am** at St. Mary Church, Aurora (In person AND via ZOOM)

- To participate in SOL, start your Zoom app, and enter the **Meeting ID: 629-734-5912**
- Optional 8:00am Parish Mass if you are participating in person.

February 8, 2025 -- **Secretariat Meeting, 9:00amCT via ZOOM (Tentative)**

- To participate in Secretariat, start your Zoom app, and enter the **Meeting ID: 731-820-8877**

March 28-30, 2025 – **Spring 2025 Region VI Encounter** (Hosted by the Omaha, NE Archdiocese) see Region VI website <https://www.natl-cursillo.org/region6/>

### Welcome New Fourth Dayers

The new 2024 Fourth Dayers are: Kathy Barger, Sandi Baxter, Patti Bohling, Cathy Kenny, Jeanette Phelps, Barb Tines, Cheryl Wishart, Tom Dierks, Jim Kenny, and John Mabile. Hopefully, all are part of a Group Reunion and participating in Ultreya. If you haven't found a group or simply haven't started to group yet, go to your area's Ultreya or contact your sponsor or a team member from the Weekend (you were sent a roster) – they can help you find a Group Reunion. It is in sharing with your brothers and sisters in Christ about your attempts to grow in Piety, Study, and (apostolic) Action that you will persevere and progress in the spiritual life ... that's where you will find "total security"!!

Remember that Christ is counting on you, and you said that you would count on Him. He gave you the gift of the Cursillo Method of Group Reunion and Ultreya to help you in the Fourth Day; these tools will help you live each day in a more focused way, that focus being Christ.



### Comments from the Men's and Women's 2024 Weekends:

- The Cursillo experience was amazing, prayerful and peaceful. What a privilege to spend time together with fellow Catholics, who are so strong in their faith. I am thankful to our priest for the invitation. God Bless

*(continued on next page)*

- The beauty of the weekend was seeing the Spirit work in the new cursillistas. When they arrived there was a “I’m not sure what I’m getting into here” look. By the time the weekend was over there was a feeling of gratitude, new friendships, and appreciation for what was experienced. The Spirit was visible in their presence and a renewed reverence for their faith.
- I am edified by the genuineness of my fellow cursillistas and the camaraderie I’ve experienced since making the Cursillo. I mostly want to thank those, then and ongoing, who put in the effort to keep us connected in mission. Tom Dierks
- When asked to come to the Cursillo weekend, I was really not sure what to expect. I have always been someone who wants to know what’s going on before I get into anything and I kind of like being in control of my surroundings. I had no idea how much it was going to change my life and my heart. What I found and learned was that I was not alone in looking for and learning more about my faith. I also learned that I was not the only one with family and personal problems. Big surprise -- it made me a little more humble and more aware of those around me. I discovered that I was judging myself harder than God was, and I learned to start looking for the good in myself and not all the things I do wrong. And in finding a way to love myself I came back to loving the Holy Eucharist as I did as a kid. By the time the weekend was over I found myself with a renewed faith and a greater love for the Holy Eucharist. Now I am learning to live my Cursillo -- it is amazing how I find opportunities to speak up about the church and tell others how it has given me the help I needed. I have started praying more to the saints and to the Blessed Mother. I’m also finding ways to learn more about my faith. I look forward to the weekly reunions with those who also have gone through Cursillo. It helps to keep me more connected and I am always learning new things about the Church.

### **From the Diocesan Coordinator**

As I write this article on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, and reflect on the Gospel proclaimed, Luke 1:26-38, I’m struck again by Mary’s fiat, her unconditional, unwavering YES!

Yes, Mary was without sin allowing her to recognize unmistakably the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Through faith and surrender she was emboldened to say yes to God. There was no weak knees moment, only wonder.

I find myself responding to God’s calls or proposals all too often answering No or Not Yet with a strong Yes coming in at third place. I get weak knees when the call doesn’t fit my idea of what I am capable of, what I am strongly committed to, what I am comfortable with.

Seven women and three men said YES to the Holy Spirit’s prompting to live a Cursillo weekend within the past two-months. You’ll see their comments about the experience elsewhere in this newsletter. The joy and memories that blossomed from within those small groups of new friends was something to behold. Perceptions were changed, openness to others through authentic conversation was developed, and Total Security realized through the experience of Group Reunion with new friends.

Father Mike Schmitz during his Bible in the Year Podcast series recently said; “Deep conversions will come through friendship.” This is something we Cursillistas know well, but everyone, it seems, is talking about the value of small groups and friendship. We have the method of carrying out what nearly everyone wants – Group Reunion and Ultreya.

If you’ve been away from the practice of the Cursillo method for a while (or never really began), don’t be afraid to get going again – get into a Group Reunion, attend an Ultreya. Rediscover the grace that comes from sharing your faith walk in friendship grouping. Take a chance you’ll experience one of those *deep conversions*.

Hopefully this newsletter will reach you before Christmas Day. God’s gifts, including your living a three-day Cursillo weekend wasn’t a mistake. Don’t wait for a grand visit by an Angel of God to convince you that Cursillo needs all of us, that Cursillo needs you! Prayerfully consider how you can help see that the proclamation of the good news, that God in Jesus loves us, reaches others. May God richly bless you as the Christmas season continues! –**Greg Vandenberg**

## **Making Friends and Making Them Friends of Christ**

Having just completed the Fall 2024 Men's and Women's Cursillo Weekends, it seemed like a good time for all of us to remember what Cursillo is all about. It's a good time to think about how we might invite others to come to better know our Friend Jesus ... because really, that's what Cursillo is all about.

Eduardo Bonnin, to whom the charism of Cursillo was given, always used to say that the only reason we have Three Day Cursillos is so that we can have Group Reunions and Ultreyas ... these being gatherings of friends. In fact, he defined Cursillo's whole mentality as follows:

- ♥ The best news that God loves us in **Christ**.
- ♥ Communicated by the best means possible--**friendship**.
- ♥ Directed to the best in each man or woman, that is, to his or her very being as a **person**— with a capacity to be convinced, to make decisions, and to persevere.

The focus of the Cursillo, then, is **ALWAYS** threefold – (1) Christ, (2) the Person, and (3) Friendship.

The whole purpose of Cursillo is to understand deeply that the Gospel is not simply opting for virtue, but rather an honest attempt to always exercise the power to opt for Christ and the person. It is to understand the clear fact that God loves us in Christ ... that God loves **me**. To be Christian, more than anything else, is to feel loved by God and live astonished by this, because what is most genuinely Christian is to be loved by God.

When we think about our longing to share the encounter with God that we ourselves experienced when we lived our Cursillo, it simply begins with friendship. Our desire (given us by God) is to help a person who is searching for that something that he identifies as his happiness or his fulfillment, or his ideal, and that we know is really Somebody – Christ! In doing so we broaden and accelerate our friend's search, trying to direct it toward the three essential encounters (with oneself, Christ, and others).

An excerpt from one of Eduardo's talks on Friendship says: "When the friendship between two friends is affirmed and strengthened by the friendship that both have with Christ, then the joy of being friends increases, and they enjoy a deeper level of friendship because the friendship forged and cultivated within the light of Christ and warmed by His grace seems to be supported and somehow secured by Him."

From the "Charism of Friendship" (National Cursillo webpage's resource center), we hear that "it is through this charism of friendship that the Grace of God and the love of Christ for His Church enable us to have a conviction to the Gospel and to make concrete decisions in our daily encounters in order to love our sisters and brothers. It is this charism of friendship that enables us to not only reach out to those whom we seek to have a relationship with but to all persons whom God has placed in our path. It is this charism of friendship that makes it possible for us to live what is fundamental to being a Christian so that we may announce the Good News to **every one we meet** that God loves them!"

This article is longer than intended 😊, but there's something really important that still needs to be said, and maybe particularly during this time of year. Matthew Kelly's book, "**Slowing Down to the Speed of Joy**", poses the question, "Would it surprise you to discover that a great mandate has been placed upon your life?" What is that mandate? To love!!! We heard that same mandate in the Leaders rollo on the Cursillo Weekend. But Kelly offers a really important additional incite – **speed and busyness get in the way of love**. In Matthew Kelly's words:

*"You cannot hurry love. You can't multi-task love. Love cannot be hacked. It can't be scheduled. It can't be achieved on a predetermined time-frame and the idea of loving someone efficiently is ludicrous.*

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*“Love cannot be rushed. It takes as long as it takes. Love says, ‘I see you. I hear you. You are worthy. I am with you. I care. Rest a while. You are safe here with me. You are worthy.’ This cannot be rushed. I cannot see you and hear you in a hurry. I can’t rush being with you or caring for you and call it love. I cannot impatiently lead you to believe you are safe.*

*“When we are moving too fast, we don’t notice the little things that love notices. A hesitant smile, a discouraged heart, other peoples’ needs, a deflated tone in her voice, a longing to be held, the way a child hovers around when he wants to talk to you. There are so many things you only see when you slow down. These are just a handful.*

*“Love notices. Love pays attention. Speed and busyness are obstacles to love. The more we add to our schedules the harder it becomes to love. The faster our lives become, the more impossible it becomes to love.”*

God’s mandate is love ... in the end, we will all be judged on how we loved (or didn’t love). Matthew Kelly included some great quotes of Corrie ten Boom, who survived Nazi persecution after having been discovered hiding Jews and people with disabilities. Here’s food for thought as you think about New Year’s Resolutions and living your 2025:

- ✓ *“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength.*
- ✓ *Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.*
- ✓ *Every experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see.*
- ✓ *If you look at the world, you’ll be distressed. If you look within, you’ll be depressed. If you look at God, you’ll be at rest.*
- ✓ *Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?*
- ✓ *Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.*
- ✓ *Worry is a cycle of inefficient thoughts whirling around a center of fear.*
- ✓ *If the devil can’t make us bad, he will make us busy.”*

And on that note, please allow yourself time to reflect on God’s mandate (to love) and on friendship being a valuable tool that will help you achieve this mandate. God’s plans for us are almost always way simpler than the ones we make for ourselves. Reflect on “slowing down to the speed of joy”. And don’t always wait until the last minute – making and being friends **now** will facilitate your inviting someone to live Cursillo as a very natural consequence of your friendship, rather than a hurried rush to get someone to a Cursillo Weekend at the last minute. Watch newsletters for upcoming Weekend dates. ***Christmas Blessing to ALL of you ... and ... De Colores!!!***

### **From the Spiritual Advisor**

Pope Francis, announcing the 2025 Jubilee year of Hope in paragraph #25. “In our journey towards the Jubilee, let us return to Scripture and realize that it speaks to us in these words: “May we who have taken refuge in him be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered” (Heb 6:18-20). Those words are a forceful encouragement for us never to lose the hope we have been given, to hold fast to that hope and to find in God our refuge and our strength.

The image of the anchor is eloquent; it helps us to recognize the stability and security that is ours amid the troubled waters of this life, provided we entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus.” Let us hold fast to Jesus Christ, our anchor! In Christ Jesus and his Hope, ***De Colores!! Fr. Bernard Lorenz***

### **Region VI Spring Encounter, March 28-30, 2025**

Hosted by the Omaha, NE Archdiocese. The Registration Form and additional information are coming. See Region VI website <https://www.natl-cursillo.org/region6/>

## Ultreyas

### Beatrice-Hebron-Crete:

Location alternates (2:00pm; usually 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of month)

- January Ultreya (January 12, 2:00pm) – Beatrice, St. Joseph Parish Hall.
- February Ultreya (February 9, 2:00pm) – Hebron, Sacred Heart Parish Hall.
- March Ultreya (March 9, 2:00pm) – Crete, Sacred Heart Parish Hall.
- April Ultreya (April 13, 2:00pm) – Beatrice, St. Joseph Parish Hall (*may be moved to April 6*).

Contacts: John/Kathy Springer, (402) 826-2699 or (402) 580-1367.

### Southwestern Nebraska (McCook-Imperial-North Platte):

Location alternates (usually 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of month)

- January Ultreya (Jan. 12, 1:30pmCT) – In-person & ZOOM (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Hall, North Platte)
- February Ultreya (Feb. 9, 1:30pmCT) – In-person & ZOOM (St. Patrick Parish Hall, McCook)
- March Ultreya (March 9, 1:30pmCT) – In-person & ZOOM (St. Patrick Parish Hall, Imperial)
- April Ultreya (April 13, 1:30pmCT) – In-person & ZOOM (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Hall, North Platte)

Contact: Kay Portillo (308) 227-1231

### Lincoln – Vietnamese Language Group:

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Lincoln

- Normally 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month after the morning Mass

Contact: Canh Nguyen (402) 435-0921.

### Not Currently Having Ultreyas [*Please participate in a neighboring Ultreya*]

- Lincoln; Doniphan-Hastings-Holdrege-Minden; Plattsmouth-Nebraska City; Weston-David City-Shelby-Wahoo

For more information, contact Greg Vandenberg (308) 530-7587, Diocesan Coordinator

### Secretariat Mail

Diocesan Coordinator – Greg Vandenberg; 3101 Meadow Court, North Platte, NE 69101 (glvandenberg@charter.net)

Lincoln Diocese Cursillo WebPage: [www.seas-np.org/cursillolincoln.html](http://www.seas-np.org/cursillolincoln.html)

Region VI WebPage: [www.natl-cursillo.org/region6](http://www.natl-cursillo.org/region6)

National WebPage: [www.natl-cursillo.org](http://www.natl-cursillo.org)

*Diocesan Newsletter is currently published as needed.*

### Invitation To Offer YOUR Palanca

You might recall the powerful Palanca you received from all over the world during your Three Day Weekend. We invite you to join in the on-going Palanca the Lincoln Diocese offers for Cursillo events taking place in all parts of the world. The first paragraph sent to a Diocese having a Three Day Weekend is included below to provide ideas / examples of what you might offer for another diocese's Cursillo event.

“The Lincoln, Nebraska, Diocese Cursillo Community would like to send encouragement and prayer for your Three Day Weekend!! Our Diocesan Cursillo Secretariat and School of Leaders has as its *Mass intention each Friday* all of the Cursillo activities going on around the world. In addition, we pray a Divine Mercy Chaplet daily that fruit might come from the many personal contacts you make during your Cursillo Weekend. Individual cursillistas throughout the Diocese are offering *Masses, Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Rosaries, Chaplets of Divine Mercy, fasting, and daily prayers* that you might come to know our Lord as Friend.”

***Please consider adding your Palanca!!***



### Secretariat Members

Diocesan Coordinator .....Greg Vandenberg (308) 530-7587  
Precursillo .....  
Three Day Weekend.....  
Postcursillo.....  
School of Leaders / Secretary .....John Springer (402) 826-2699  
Treasurer ..... Kathy Springer (402) 826-2699  
Spiritual Advisor ..... Fr. Bernard Lorenz (308) 414-1195

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***Welcome to the New Cursillistas!!***  
***Christ is counting on ALL of Us!!***

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**Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska**

**December 2024**

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**Make a Friend, Be a Friend, Bring Your Friend to Christ!**

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