



Filipino Cursillo Community  
Diocese of Oakland



Issue 7 Volume IV Year 2024

## **EDITORIAL** by Sis Celsa Taraya

For God Lent is a joyful Season.

He is joyful because people are more prayerful, more forgiving, more giving, and more sacrificing.

But why does it take a Season to be more of anything? Aren't prayers said daily? Aren't people going to Mass to celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday and most days for some? Aren't people giving alms and doing charity work year round?

It is never enough. There's no limit in loving God, Season or not. He hungers for us. If He gets more during Lent, let it be.

Let it be that we are most kind to each other, considerate, empathizing, understanding of others instead of self, and non-judgmental.

Let it be that we are so sorry for sins we commit that we confess, receive absolution, do penance, and make a solemn promise to sin no more.

God is joyful.

Rejoice and be glad.

De Colores

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# Triduum – Bridge from Lent to Easter

By Deacon Steve Budnik

When does the season of Lent end? The last day of Lent is Wednesday, of Holy Week (this year 3/27). Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week are not part of a Liturgical Season. Rather on the evening of Holy Thursday we enter into the summit of the Liturgical Year which is the Easter Triduum. The Easter Triduum extends from the evening of Holy Thursday through the evening of Easter Sunday. Though chronologically three days, they are liturgically one day unfolding for us the unity of Christ's Paschal Mystery. The single celebration of the Triduum marks the end of the Lenten season and leads to the Mass of the Resurrection of the Lord at the Easter Vigil.

The Triduum forms a bridge from Lent to Easter. We are invited to journey across this bridge as church accompanying Jesus through the celebrations of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday of the Lord's Passion, and the Mass of the Resurrection of the Lord.

## HOLY THURSDAY

Traditionally, the Chrism Mass is held in the Cathedral of each diocese on the morning of Holy Thursday. At this Mass the local bishop blesses the oils and consecrates the chrism used for baptism, confirmation, holy orders, and anointing of the sick throughout the year for the entire diocese. For convenience, in many dioceses the Chrism Mass is celebrated prior to Holy Thursday. On the evening of Holy Thursday each parish celebrates the Mass of the Lord's Supper where the oils and chrism which have been blessed and consecrated by the bishop are ceremoniously received by the parish. With the beginning of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, Lent officially ends, and we enter into the "three-fold celebration of the Easter Mystery". This mass usually includes a recreation of the scene of Christ washing the disciples' feet. It intends to bring us to the reality that the action of Jesus at His last meal with His disciples taking bread, giving thanks, and giving it to them continues to bring the Eucharist to us today. In other words, at each Mass Jesus actions on the first Holy Thursday are made present. This odd mix of the finality of Jesus' last meal and His real presence in the Eucharist is highlighted by taking the Eucharist on procession to the chapel of repose as we enter a period of fast from the celebration of the mass until the Easter Vigil. We are led to ponder our appreciation of Christ present body, blood, soul, and divinity. What would it be like to live without the Eucharist?

## GOOD FRIDAY

The liturgical celebration of Good Friday is the celebration of the Lord's Passion with veneration of the cross. The focus is on Jesus passion and death with the first reading of the Servant Song from the Prophet Isaiah (52:13-53:12), the responsorial Psalm 31 – David's Psalm of trust in the Lord, the second reading about Jesus the High Priest from the letter to the Hebrews (4:14-16; 5:7-9), and the passion according to John (18:1-19:42). We meditate on the centrality of Jesus passion to our salvation and the love of God expressed through so great a sacrifice. We are led to *Behold the wood of the Cross* and moved to embrace and kiss it.

## HOLY SATURDAY

On Holy Saturday we wait in silent expectation for evening to fall so we may begin the summit of the summit of our liturgical Year. If the Triduum is the summit of our Liturgical Year, the Easter Vigil is the summit of the Triduum.

The Easter Vigil begins in darkness. We, as the Christian people await in vigilant expectation for the Resurrection of the Lord during the night. We light the new fire. Fire is blessed and the paschal candle is lighted to illumine the night proclaiming Jesus to be our light and our life. We light our individual candles from the paschal candle which represents the light of Christ as we process into the dark church. The Paschal candle is processed by the deacon chanting *Lumen Christi, Christ our Light, Luz de Cristo*. The great Easter Proclamation, *Exultet* which rejoices in our salvation history is sung.

A unique aspect of the Easter Vigil is an extended liturgy of the word recounting of the outstanding deeds of the history of salvation in seven readings from the Old Testament chosen from the law and the prophets and two readings from the New Testament, namely from the apostles and from the gospel. Thus, the Lord "beginning with Moses and all the prophets" ( Lk 24.27, 44-45) meets us on our journey and, opening up our minds and hearts, prepares us to share in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup.

Our excitement is peaked during the Vigil as the Paschal Candle is taken from its stand and placed in the Baptismal to bless the water for those who are about to enter the Church through Baptism, some of whom may also be confirmed and receive first Holy Communion at this most sacred liturgy. Of course, our fast from the celebration of the Eucharist is ended and ones again we participate in bread and wine becoming the body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Easter Vigil concludes with a solemn blessing and us being sent forth by the dismissal the one time of the year when it is accompanied by a double alleluia.

It has been suggested that all parish planning should start and end with the sacred Triduum. The Triduum is not a restaging of the historical events of our salvation. Rather, it is a renewal of this history in our lives today making it real, present, and active in our world. May we rise with Christ to a new life through Baptism, some of whom may also be confirmed and receive first Holy Communion at this most sacred liturgy. Of course, our fast from the celebration of the Eucharist is ended and ones again we participate in bread and wine becoming the body

## Poets in Our Midst

### Let There Be Light?

By Sis Daisy Lopez

Caught a sight from a moonlit night  
Nearby clouds moving across my sight  
Covered the moon, dimmed its light  
Let there be light! My wish tonite.

We all love to be in the Light  
Where darkness is far from sight  
For Christians, Light's symbolism  
Is that of a guide, a source of being

Let there be light! Echoes around  
Amidst life's events and realities  
For only Light can guide us right  
Amidst darkness, amidst difficulties

For Christians who believe in Christ  
Let Him be our light, Let there be light



### Mary's Love

By Bro. Deacon Noe

In youth's tender bloom, a tale unfurls,  
To Mary, a story of celestial curls,  
A maiden graced by whispers in the wind,  
Divine request, a song the heavens pinned.

At the age where love's dreams softly rise,  
No compelling hand, yet deep within, she sighs,  
She heeded God's call, a murmuring plea,  
A choice profound, a sacred mystery.

"Thy will be done," her melody unfolds,  
Her fiat, a poem the celestial holds,  
In shadows cast, where doubts like shadows  
play,  
A trust profound, ascending far away.

O Mary, guide us with your courage rare,  
In heart and soul, your essence finds the air.

## A Valentine Message

from Deacon Noe Tuason

Sharing a Valentine message from a sister to her sister who recently lost her husband. Both were my childhood friends. This year, Ash Wednesday happens to fall on Valentine's Day.

"Dust and a rose.

Crumbling obscurity and tingling lushness.

What conversation can start from here? According to Iris Murdoch: 'Love is the difficult realization that something other than oneself is real.'

Suddenly you stop and silence is all around – you come upon an environment that is both obscure and tingling lushness. She is right. She is speaking the truth. And you go through your mind and heart and soul and ask:

Is there someone, something, I regard more important, more real than I regard myself to be? And oh, the difference my answer would make to this world we are in right now. Depending on our answer, the thick loneliness that holds thousands in bondage would start to thaw because we paid attention to someone else.

That is what Lent is about. It is about the other. And it is difficult. Lent is to come upon an environment that invites us to slow down and ask the questions that matter and which change us inside out. We are willing to go through the death-rebirth cycle because we gain the capacity to hope through the night.

Lent is about unselfing. It is finding out that even fragmentation and dust can feed the ground that nourishes the rose whose tingling lushness is far more important than anything I can imagine or even want."

# ANGELS AMONG US



## God, our perfect Example

By Sis Penny de Leon

God is love and from what we all know of God and His acts of service that He performed; He wants us to follow Him by helping our fellow men. Helping the needy and serving others pleases our God. Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfishness and vainglory; rather, humbly regards others as more important than yourselves," and with this includes with my daily prayers to God to please allow me according to thy will to genuinely serve my brothers and sisters within my capacity.

Many years ago, I started as one of the many volunteers of the Philippine Medical Society of Northern California to serve our needy "kababayan" in several provinces of the Philippines in dire need of free medical assistance. This year, 2024 is the 52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of PMSNC since its inception in 1972 and the enthusiasm and the genuine desire to meet the needs of thousands of impoverished communities remain to be the goal.

Some of our Cursillista brothers and sisters had been with us on the mission before and new ones including Bro. Art de Leon, had joined with the same feeling of inner joy and fulfillment to serve others. With my critical care background as a nurse, I am always assigned to the post anesthesia care area or recovery room. Even after my retirement in 2018, I kept my license active and updates of required credentials to meet the requirements to be assigned within the hospital area.

It's an experience filled with moments of joy, inspiration and heartbreaking choices along the way. There is glimmer of hope for those we helped with a positive outcome and heart breaking for those we provided with palliative care and leaving the care to God's will.

This year in January 2024, with 165 delegates, the medical mission was held in Bayambang, Pangasinan, where more than 7000 patients received free services, including adult and pediatric outpatient medicine, major, and minor surgeries, dental care, health education, eyecare and medications.

It was another successful undertaking carried out with the unselfish love shared by all the delegates and the volunteers of the sponsoring province. The food, transportation and all the services provided by the sponsoring province were gestures of pure friendship and their service to their constituents.

We were in Batangas City, when during our break from the recovery unit several nurses from Highland went along with me to visit the nursery and surprised to see a baby boy a lot bigger than the rest who according to the staff was not able to be discharged because the mother cannot pay the bill for the baby's release. We made an immediate appeal to other volunteers and from 11am to 1 pm we were able to raise money more than enough to pay for his discharge, extra money for the family and several boxes of clothing of various sizes to bring home were collected.

This year was no different when a call for help is needed generous hearts were there to give a lending hand.

Our service to our fellow men when done with all our heart and genuinely given is serving God. There was a study done that supports that volunteering enhances an individual's overall sense of purpose and identity. The reason for this result supports the notion that helping others makes someone rewarded, fulfilled and empowered. Obedience and service is what we need to do to show God that we love Him and others. He showed us His perfect example up to His being hanged on the cross for His love to us. We all know that serving others is serving Him and the Lord will reward each one for all the good deeds we do.

May our actions be the reflection of the Gospel and the living of what is fundamental to being a Christian and as a Cursillista to bring the Charism of the Cursillo Movement, Friendship to others.



## Sis Judith Snow

Sis Judith Snow – she's a beautiful person inside and out. She's coping with her grief from losing her beloved husband Ralph by delving deeply into advocacies and charity works. She goes around the FCC meeting venues, collects empty plastic water bottles, and takes them home to sell. No fail. Sells beanies and bonnets for a few dollar profit as well.

Why? One would ask....to fund her acts of mercy in the Philippines is the answer. She does not raise funds outside of this. If money raised is not enough to feed 250 children, she pulls her pocket book to make up for it.

She goes home to her place in Tondo, Manila almost every year. She grew up there. She noticed very little change from then and now. Most people are still poor and destitute. Children are still hungry, begging, and running barefoot on the streets. She takes with her donated relief goods and school supplies to the Sto Nino Church where she distributes and feed the children. Works with 20 local volunteers.

She visits home for the aged, gives them basic necessities like toiletries, diapers, soaps, toothpaste and toothbrush. Helps out disaster victims. Gives random financial aid to the destitute on YouTube.

An angel indeed.

Raise your glass to Sis Judith.

# **PRE CURSILLO**

**By Sis Celsa Taraya**

**PreCursillo as one of the Phases of the Cursillo Movement plays a great role in inviting and selecting candidates, following an established criterion. It might be viewed as process of elimination.**

**First, he has to be baptized, has mental and physical control, willing to be helped, clean and cleansable.**

**To achieve that, the PreCursillo core committee has devised a plan to carry out the process early on which is called the Parish Outreach.**

**Bro Lino and Sis Josie collaborated a template that can be used in any Parish with the blessing of Chair Sis Corrie.**

**Den Steve wrote a short elevator pitch for anyone to say at the pulpit. Because of time constraint, extempore speech is not encouraged.**

**Sis Corrie's wish for Easter is to get this going soon and fast. OLGC Parish and Reunion Team facilitated by Bro Ananda and Sis Lynne are the first ones to step up the plate and said YES! Hoping for the support of PCC and FCC membership to make this initiative a success.**

**Onward!!**



# Ultreya Report...

## The Filipino Cursillo Community (FCC) Yesterday and Today

By: Sis Espie de Castro

It seemed like yesterday when we joined the **Our Lady of Good Counsel (OLGC) team** in 1998 and officially became FCC members.

The members and officers of FCC made us comfortable enough to make us feel most welcomed.

They were very caring, nurturing and actively involved in different ministries such as

- 1) Senior feeding in Oakland, headed by Bro. Joe and Sis. Auring Calub, Bro. Jun and Sis. Carol Amores. Sad to say they have passed on. May they rest in peace.
- 2) Mananitas for sick members, headed by Bro. Noli Manaois and
- 3) helping parishes with fund-raising initiatives to mention a few.

We had a group which presented "Larawan ng Lahi"- where we sang and danced from the early Barangay days to the modern day songs which each depicted a history of the Philippines, directed by Fr. Leo Asuncion. We performed for more than 5 years to raise funds for the parishes.

The FCC then was still a small group but very active and dynamic. We already had Friendship dance, Cursillo Weekends, Retreats, other activities, and committees like we have today.

Today, the FCC is a bigger group than before. More members are attracted to join because of the Essence and Mentality of our Founder Eduardo Bonnin exemplified in the Cursillo Method of Friendship. As a Cursillo Movement, FCC has accountability and alliances to the National, the Diocesan Bishop and the FCC Secretariat respectively. Adherence to our Bylaws aligned with the National Secretariat is expected.

Currently, the SOL Book Club presents a platform of Study focused on the history of the Cursillo Movement, knowing its Founder and the Rector's Guide: Step by Step he wrote to better understand the Method for the Weekend and its simplicity for the benefit of the Candidates, never the Servers.

Our goal is to attract the faraways back to our fold through Friendship simply put as to make a friend, be a friend and bring a friend to Christ.

De Colores

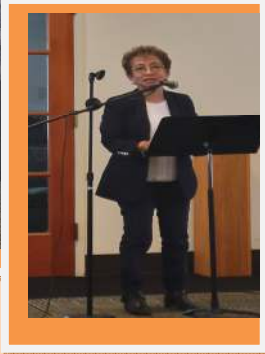
**JANUARY 2024 ULTREYA  
HOST – POST CURSILLO COMMITTEE**



**Post Cursillo Committee**



**January 2024 Birthday Celebrants**



**Ultreya Witness Talk – Sis Lynne Evans  
Affirmation – Sis. Evelyn Isidro**

**FEBRUARY 2024 ULTREYA  
HOST – OUR LADY OF FATIMA TEAM**



**ULTREYA WITNESS – Sis Josie Herrera  
AFFIRMATION – Bro Mario Camorongán &  
Sis Cora Pediglorio**



**February 2024  
Birthday Celebrants**

**MARCH 2024 ULTREYA  
HOST – St. Patrick Team  
Witness Talk – Sis Norma Rivera  
Lay Affirmation – Sis Paz Recinto**



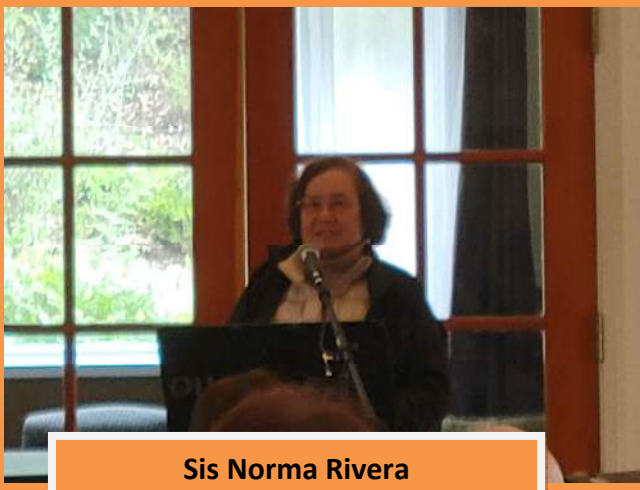
**March 2024 Birthday  
Celebrants**



**St Patrick Team**



**Welcome to our newest Cursillo Team  
METANOIA**



**Sis Norma Rivera  
Witness Speaker**

# What I realized about the Rector's Guide

BY Bro Harvey Barkin

San Jose Filipino Cursillo Movement

(From the Cursillo National Newsletter - Oct 2022)

## Note from the Editor

**"It's been a contention among us that the adoption of SBS: Rector's Guide in our Weekend is too early, too fast. Other dioceses are hesitant, totally not doing it, and not giving it a chance. This article from Bro Harvey Barkin, San Jose Filipino Cursillo Movement proves otherwise. Read it with an open mind." Take care. Sis Celsa**

## What I Realized About the Rector's Guide

**T**he San Jose Filipino Cursillo Movement (SJFCM) spent a Rector's Guide weekend dry run last August 26-28 at the mission town of San Juan Bautista.

### The bankruptcy stories

After the third or fourth bankruptcy story, the tales became less boring and began to grab attention as a pattern emerged.

I realized that the bankruptcy stories address a still most concerning issue. In the days before there were rollo templates and examples in *The Cursillo Movement's Cursillo Manual* (copyright 1999, 2006) rollistas did not have a clear guidance as to what makes for a perfect witness talk example.

Some Cursillistas in their talks would enumerate a list of mass schedules, novenas, and other ministries. They don't tell the story of how they evangelize. Some witness speakers still do this at the Ultreya.

But the acts of piety, study and evangelization are not effectively shared if they are just enumerated and the stories of the how are not told.

Some Cursillistas run with the concept that "Cursillo" means little courses in Spanish. They translate it literally to transform the rollos and the School of Leaders talks into Catechism. Unfortunately, this shuts off a lot of older Cursillistas from listening to a "class" lecture.

The bankruptcy story is a great argument for more relevant witness talks (not proselytizing) in the rollos as well as the School of Leaders.

### 5 Candidates to 1 Leader Ratio

I realized, the best argument for having a skeleton team is that the intimacy is deeper. It means the new Cursillistas can easily remember these five team members and not be overwhelmed with 20.

In the SJFCM, the 4th Day reunion is typically a month after both men's and women's Weekends – by that time, the new Cursillistas would have forgotten who's who among the 20 team members. The rapport must be rebuilt. The Weekend's purpose needs to be recalled.

### The games and the jokes

In any gathering and bonding, jokes will always come up. In the heat of exchanging jokes, things can do get rowdy and bawdy.

Jokes are important release valves after a busy schedule. Jokes can

also reveal the wit and character of a person if one were to analyze the joke that hits the spot. The Rector's Guide made us realize there should be a time for jokes.

The same is true for games. Some personalities need more physical outlets than others. But the prevailing situation for the SJFCM is that most candidates who join can barely kick a soccer ball.

This part of the Rector's Guide was probably intended for the youth. In Bonnin's time, he targeted the youth because of his early relationship with the Christian youth group. In our time and at our age, video games may be a better option to release stress and fatigue.

### The schedule and corridor work

Then there's the corridor work and the quadrant for measuring the spirituality of the candidate which all team members are required to do. This feels like an anachronism in our age of total transparency and almost paranoid privacy.

I understand why the corridor work and quadrant seem unseemly but are necessary at the Weekend.

Perhaps, a major part of the legwork on the spiritual level of the candidates should be done by the sponsors. They can brief the team on what they found out.



### Overall

Those of us who have been with the Cursillo long enough have stopped marveling how the methodology transforms individuals. Every Cursillista knows it works. But on a different level, veteran Cursillistas marvel at how the methodology works because it is simple.

This may be why some Cursillistas are compelled to add an obscure ritual, an old prayer, a remembered element from pre-Vatican II times to make sure the methodology feels complete.

What has not been given much air play until now is that Bonnin also employed psychology in the Cursillo Movement so that it works on humans. Bonnin intended the Cursillo for laymen, not as another clergy or meditative order.

Now, I realize what they mean when they urge Cursillistas to seek and preserve the authentic charism of the Cursillo. It simply means to de-clutter the methodology until the real Cursillo comes out without the additions.

Bro. Harvey Barkin, San Jose Filipino Cursillo Movement

# SCHOOL OF LEADERS

## SUMMARY OF JANUARY 2024 SPIRITUAL REFLECTION AND TECHNICAL TALK

By Sis Gid Eugenio

TOPIC: “My Spiritual Testament” by Eduardo Bonnin

### SPIRITUAL REFLECTION: (SR. MARY PETER, ASSF)

Sr. Mary Peter’s center of her spiritual reflection is the “in-dwelling” of the Holy Spirit within us. In John 14:23 Jesus said “Whoever loves me will keep my Word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our dwelling in him”; this is the kind of love that is overwhelmingly overflowing beyond the capability of our mind – shown to us by Jesus on the Cross.

Hundreds of Founders developed and formed their Congregations and Lay Movements according to the Foundational Charism given to them by the Holy Spirit; these founders such as Eduardo Bonnin encountered and fell in love with God – nourished that love – persevered and suffered through persecutions for the Love and shared that Love with others; followers believed and continued their charisms through the years helping the Universal Church grow in spirituality.

In Eduardo Bonnin’s article on Rector’s Guide “This is The Way”, he wrote “The only thing I know is that if Cursillo is to remain faithful to the purpose for which it was intended and for which it was prayed and for which we have been grateful, it should not lower its target, and every Cursillo weekend should offer those present as lively, simple, clear and true experience of the Christ of the Gospel as best as possible. He, who through His resurrection and His Grace is alive, active, normal and close to each person. This requires and calls for a personal encounter between Christ and each individual person. Bonnin also mentioned “Christ is looking for the person, not for what surrounds him.”

Sr. Mary said that the key to living the Divine Will is our ATTENTIVENESS – which means striving to constantly to keep the divine attitude of doing everything for and in Jesus.

What keeps Sr. Mary in her vocation of 24 years as a Franciscan and a Cursillista? She quoted St. Faustina Kowalska, “to encounter Him in my own soul and to live my whole life with Him I seek no happiness except in my interior in which God abides; I rejoice in God within me, here I dwell constantly with Him; here I am at my most intimate with Him; here I simply dwell with Him; here is a place beyond the reach of human gain; the Blessed Virgin is encouraging me to abide with God in this manner.”

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### TECHNICAL: (CELSA TARAYA)

Writing a **last will and testament** serves as an important part of protecting your final assets and wishes; it includes information about your physical assets. On the other hand, a **spiritual will** protects your non-physical assets to pass down such as traditions, values, and lessons.

Sis. Celsa’s talk delivered the facts and the motives of Bonnin to preserve his spiritual testament from the beginning of the Cursillos in Christianity

Movement with the intention that they would endure by means of notarized document in order that no doubt will remain with regard to its origin and authenticity.

Eduardo Bonnin was a very meticulous and profound reader, thinker and writer; his reason of writing his book “My Spiritual Testament” is this: “I sincerely believe that one of the greatest assets that I possess is the knowledge of what the real Cursillos in Christianity consist of, as well as the Movement engendered by them. And I know by proven experience that when each piece that makes it up: Precursillo, Three Day Weekend and Postcursillo fulfills its purpose, it responds with clockwork precision to its aim which nothing else but to try to have the Good News of the Gospel reach as many people as possible, and preferably those farthest away.”

Bonnin included in his book a warning to the “seafarers” after he mentioned that this is the way to conduct the Three Day Cursillo weekend today: “I do not know how the Cursillo weekend will be conducted in the future. We started in a place where there was no electricity, and today we hand out the list of those attending the Cursillo printed by computer.”

The reason for this warning to future Cursillistas “to be faithful to the goal that Cursillo even after and for which it was devised, designed, prayed for and structured - is because in the past it has been proven that from its inception in 1944, more than a few times - I wish to believe with good intention – they (Cursillo materials) have been skimmed, deactivated, abducted or nipped in the bud of their nature and effectiveness, undoubtedly by people of goodwill and perhaps even believing that in so doing they were making a gift to God and to Cursillo.”

As per sister Celsa’s recommendation and conclusion, “the **Rector’s Guide** is part of Eduardo’s legacy to us, his Spiritual Testament, his will. It is the best thing he owned which he could leave to us. Let us treasure his legacy, the Charism of Cursillo, which he has entrusted to our care. Let us preserve the purity of the Charism. Let us be the keepers of the flame of Cursillo in honor of Eduardo, but first and foremost, let us be grateful participants in the gift that the Holy Spirit has given to us through Eduardo Bonnin. Let us all cherish what Eduardo left us, let us continue the work that he began through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and let us honor his memory by listening to his words, being guided by his wisdom and following in his footsteps. Let us recognize the one Founder, let us treasure the Foundational Charism and let us read the signs of the times in light of the Charism!”

## FUNNIER SIDE OF THINGS

From Sis Penny - I have collected many anecdotes, one was when we went to Iloilo and I was in recovery room along with some student volunteers from UC Berkeley, who were raised here in US and have not seen a water buffalo or carabao. The hospital in Pototan, Iloilo was located beside a rice field with a carabao on site. I lost some of the disposable table covers only to find out that the students grabbed those covers and took them to the field to cover the carabao to ride on. Funny indeed and they had a great time.

Another one was in Capiz, along with some of the OR staff of the hospital where I used to work when my luggage was delayed and during the dinner at Mar Roxas ranch with the whole delegation of more than 170 delegates, my name was called with this message, "Dr. Penny de Leon your luggage was found." Giggles from those who knew me as a nurse not a doctor started calling me "doc" at work and even at present whenever they see me. We created so many memories and developed friendships that are to be treasured.

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@TheLaughFactory

I told my girlfriend she drew her eyebrows too high. She seemed surprised.

How do you make a tissue dance? Put a little boogie in it.

President Lincoln was approached by a woman after a political speech....If you were my husband I would poison your tea. Lincoln replied....if you were my wife I'll gladly drink it.

Why should you never play poker at the zoo? Too many cheetahs.

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Readers Digest

What did the DNA say to another DNA?.....Do these genes make me look fat?

Did you hear they arrested the devil? Yeah, they got him on possession.

My IQ test results came back. They were negative.

Scientists have recently discovered a food that great reduces sex drive. It's called a wedding cake.

# Words To Live By

Even I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me  
Psalm 23:4

*The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but schedule your priorities*  
Steven Covey

*Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.*  
Maya Angelou

Where, O death, is your victory  
1 Cor 15:15

*Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.*  
Winston Churchill

***Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence and learning***  
Frederick Faber

Keep you face always in the sunshine and the shadows will fall behind.  
Walt Whitman



# SPIRITUAL ADVISOR CORNER

## A Message from Deacon Rey Encarnacion

(Read at March 25, 2024 Team Reps Meeting)

Good evening brothers and sisters,

I thank Sis Cora for relaying my message to all of you. I am still recovering from persistent and at times, intense cough - now on y 6<sup>th</sup> week (but who's counting). Been to the doctor twice already. But most of all because now it is Holy week.

As we stand on the threshold of Holy Week, we are invited to enter a time unlike any other in the liturgical year - a time to deeply contemplate the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This sacred week offers us a spiritual journey, inviting us to journey alongside Christ from the gates of Jerusalem to the glory of the Easter morning. It's a journey that requires preparation, not of the material kind, but of the heart and spirit. It's a time for us to get closer to God and think about how we can live better lives.

Yesterday, Palm Sunday, we remember Jesus entering Jerusalem with everyone waving palm branches at him. This happy moment soon becomes serious as we start to remember the tough journey Jesus had to go through. Palm Sunday makes us think about the times we worry too much about what others think instead of focusing on what God wants. It prompts us to reflect on our own loyalty and devotion. Are we fair-weather followers, or are we committed to walking with Jesus, even when the path leads to Calvary?

Spending time on Holy Week isn't just about remembering things that happened a long time ago. It's a chance for us to really feel part of the story and let it transform us. It calls for introspection, prayer, and action. Let us enter this Holy Week with open hearts, ready to journey with Jesus through His suffering and death to the glory of His Resurrection. May this week be a profound of renewal and deepened faith, as we walk the path of suffering and joy alongside our Savior. Let's use this week to grow and get closer to God.

To this end and as your Spiritual Adviser, I ask you to consider adjourning your meeting or if you must, keep it short and be kind to one another and then spend more time to get closer to God and think about how we can live better lives.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Dcn. Rey

# The Great Commissioning the Cursillo Way

## By Deacon Noe Tuason

In Jesus' last words to the apostles, He gave them a mission: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20). We refer to this as the Great Commissioning. The theologian C.S. Lewis said that there are two parts to the mission. The first "Go...and make disciples of all nations" is fairly much understood as reaching out to non-Christians and making converts. We definitely need to go out to evangelize people; we definitely need to share the Gospel message and help them come to faith in Christ; we also definitely need to help them affirm that faith by being baptized into the fellowship of the Church. This was fairly much what the early Christians did starting with Paul and his followers. They spread out to various locations to convert Gentiles. This was also what the early missionaries did. They joined the adventurers who sailed the Seven Seas to discover new lands. In the new discoveries, the missionaries brought Christ to the heathens many times at the expense of their lives.

Our founder, Eduardo Bonnin, observed that the mission should not only reach out to those who have not heard of Christ but also those who have been baptized but have drifted away from the teachings of Christ. He noticed when he was a soldier in the Spanish Civil War that many of his fellow soldiers in the barracks, though Catholics, were not exactly practicing what they had been taught.

This is also true today as it was during Bonnin's time when many Catholics no longer attend Mass or worse, do not practice the faith at all. A significant percentage even list themselves as having no religion or "None." Bonnin refers to those who have moved away from Christ as "faraways."

This brings us to what C.S. Lewis referred to as the second part of the mission: "Teach(ing) them to observe all that I (Jesus) have commanded you." This means that the focus should not only be restricted to specific commands. Nor is it simply a matter of obtaining information. Though those are essential in learning, they must be internalized. Jesus' moral and ethical instruction must be a way of life that pleases God.

Giving priority to the teaching of Jesus certainly does not minimize other parts of the Bible; in fact, it will send us back to the Old Testament and forward to the New Testament as we seek more light. The New Testament fulfills the Old Testament.

In light of the Great Commissioning, the Cursillo movement is not just about the 3-day Cursillo weekend (or simply Cursillo). This is only the second stage of the Cursillo method, the first being the recruitment stage or the Pre-Cursillo. The Cursillo weekend plants the seed of reconversion to the mission. Equally important as the reconversion process is what happens to the new Cursillistas after the weekend. They transition to the Post-Cursillo, where the internalization of the second part of the mission happens-- "Teaching them to observe...what I (Jesus) have commanded you." For the Cursillo movement, the best way for the internalization to happen is through the friendship groups—the Group Reunions. This is stated so succinctly in the movement as "Make a friend, be a friend, and bring your friend to Christ." It is through friendship that

Cursillistas become close to each other and to Christ on a continuing basis, and joyfully work together to fulfill their apostolic actions. The post-Cursillo also includes the Ultreya where members of group reunions meet and share, and the School of Leaders where members continue their formation as missionary disciples of Christ.

However, dissension could happen within a group reunion or among group reunions. It could be due to various reasons such as varying personalities, personal agendas, allegiances, failures to listen and dialogue, impatience, or simply a clash of egos and pride. If or when dissension is unresolved, the movement loses its focus on the mission. What do we do so that this will not happen?—transformation. We need a Christ-centric ongoing formation.

This occurs as we internalize Jesus' teachings and obey them in faith and love. Transformation is the work of a lifetime. This is a labor of love. It demands patience and caring for each other, and lots of praying together. Failure to do so leads to failure in our mission—bring our friend to Christ. The mission is and should always be the focus of our membership in the movement. That is and should be our top priority. If we stay together with one heart and one mind, if we stay together with the heart and mind of Jesus within us, there is no reason to fail.

De Colores!

# What's New....

## Discernment for Diocesan Coordinator, Secretary & Communications Administrator Feb. 10, 2024 – Sta Maria Parish Church

### Participants in the discernment



L-R (Sis Belle, Sis Alma, Sis Josie, Sis Norma, Sis Gigi)  
Middle – Bro Lino

### Adhoc Committee and Participants



Standing L-R (Bro Danny P, Sis Josie, Bro Lino, Bro Joel, Sis Irma, Sis Cora & Dcn Rey)

Sitting L-R (Sis Belle, Sis Gigi, Sis Alma & Sis Norma)

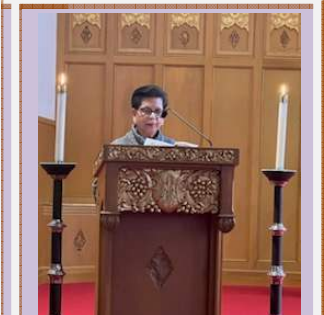
## Lenten Retreat & Stations of the Cross

March 16, 2024

Santa Maria Parish Church

Theme – God's Call for Lent: A Change of Attitude

Retreat Master – Fr. Mars Cortez



# The Chronicles of Joy

## The Cathedral of Messina



Sis Joy Inocencio

Our Lady of Holy  
Rosary

Messina is known for being Sicily's capital city when the region was a powerful kingdom. Considered as the door of Sicily, Messina's port has been, over centuries, a coveted strategic spot for trading.

Messina is a feminine name of Arabic origin, meaning "middle" and the name of a famous city in Sicily, Italy. Founded by Greek colonists in the 8th century BC, it was initially called Zancle before being renamed Messana in 500 BC, and finally, Messina.

Given that at the end of 2023 summertime in the Mediterranean region, tourist/travelers flock around the attractions at the Port of the City of Messina, Sicily. And since there were no set excursions going for us that day, we walked around the town center (about a few blocks away) from where the ship was docked. Tourism staff handed out maps of the city that helped us a glimpse of where and what to see in the vicinity.

There seemed to be a popular path for everyone that led us to the town center; a restaurant with outdoor seating, a beautiful fountain, small gift shops, and other specialty stores around. And there stood the beautiful fortress church of **The Bell Tower of the Cathedral of Messina** right in the middle of the town center! While people gathered and waited around, I hurriedly walked into the church's shop to get some insights of an upcoming activity. It's so fascinating to learn about the church's history, the scheduled carousel show, and see the world's most

Historical Notes:

Built during Norman time, it was consecrated by the Archbishop Berardo in 1197 in the presence of Emperor Henry VI of Swabia and Queen Constance of Hauteville. From its beginnings, its history has been turbulent and it has been destroyed and rebuilt several times. In 1254, during King Conrad IV of Swabia's funeral, the numerous tall candles set fire to the decorations put for the occasion and the fire spread to the wooden ceiling. 1300 saw a period of renovation and artistic enrichment for the Cathedral, initiated by Archbishop Guidotto de Abbiate, who commissioned the mosaics in the apse bowls and the decorations on the façade. The embellishment continued for several centuries. During the 16th century Giovan Angelo Montorsoli began the Chapels of the Apostles and the decoration of the marble floor.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century new architectural and decorative elements in typical Baroc style were introduced.

In 1783, an earthquake badly damaged the Cathedral, destroying its bell tower, 90 mt. high that was later substituted by two small bell towers placed on the side apses. On the 28<sup>th</sup> December 1908 an earthquake destroyed Messina leaving in its wake 60,000 victims and the city a heap of ruins. The Cathedral was quite completely destroyed: only the perimetral walls and the apses remained standing.

Archbishop D' Arrigo began the reconstruction that was continued by the new Archbishop Angelo Paino.

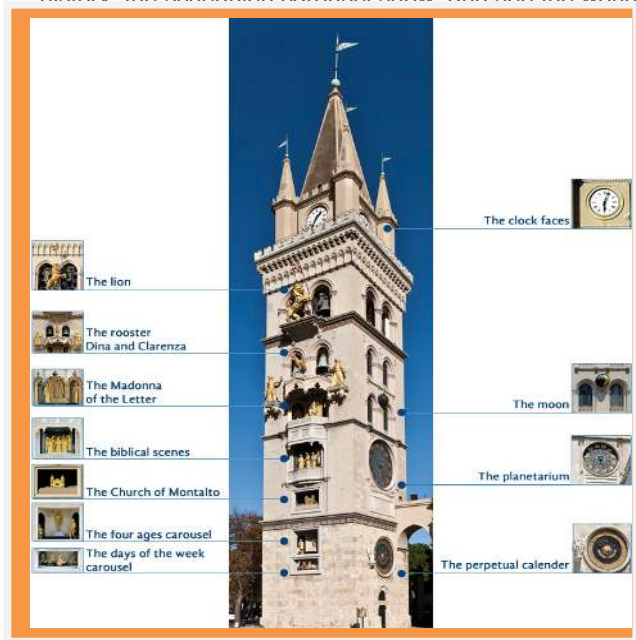
The Cathedral was consecrated on 13th of August 1929. Unfortunately, in 1943, during the bombings of the WWII, several burning fragments fell on the building, starting a fire which lasted for two days. The fire destroyed all the decorations, even those who had been recovered after the 1908 earthquake. In only four years, Archbishop Paino rebuilt the church, and reopened it for worship, in August 1947. It is dedicated to the Assumption of Virgin Mary.

**Clock History:**

<https://www.messinarte.it/the-bell-tower-of-the-cathedral-of-messina/>

**Photos of the church:**

[https://www.google.com/search?q=the+bell+tower+of+the+cathedral+of+messina&sca\\_esv=850edfa7a76475f6&rlz=1C1SQJL\\_enUS](https://www.google.com/search?q=the+bell+tower+of+the+cathedral+of+messina&sca_esv=850edfa7a76475f6&rlz=1C1SQJL_enUS)



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Apr 13, 2024 – Ultreya @ Santa Maria Parish Hall
- Apr 20, 2024 – Leader’s Formation Workshop @ Veterans Hall Fremont
- May 11, 2024 – Ultreya @ St Raymond Parish Hall
- May 20, 2024 – SOL Zoom
- Jun 1, 2024 - Friendship Dance @Double Tree Pleasanton

Please visit our website for more details on upcoming events – [www.fccoakland.com](http://www.fccoakland.com)

## REMINDER:

- Secretariat Meeting – every 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month  
7 pm via ZOOM Meeting ID: 846 5195 3571 Passcode: SECRETARIAT
- SOL Book Club – every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month  
7 pm via ZOOM Meeting ID: 836 7743 6577 Passcode: BOOKCLUB
- SOL / Team Rep Meeting – In Person Quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct) – Zoom (Feb (Mar, May, Jun, Aug, Sept, Nov)  
7 pm via ZOOM Meeting ID: 882 9453 2558 Passcode: SOL

\*\*\* For more information, check the FCC Website –[www.fccoakland.com](http://www.fccoakland.com) \*\*\*

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