



Forward

Cursillo in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

Volume XI

June 2006

Our Mission: To Christianize Environments and Develop Lay Leadership

From the Chair

Welcome to all the new Cursillistas in the San Diego Community. You bring blessings to us all.

I just wanted to write a few words to you and share with you a bit of what this community is all about. Who are we, and how we serve God and His church. How does "Make a friend, be a friend and bring that friend to Christ," work in our daily lives, and what is it all about? I think it's more, so much more. In this community I think we take that statement one step beyond, and that is, we continue to show the love of Christ.

Remember when you all first arrived on your Cursillo weekend? Someone was there to take your bags, someone helped you to your bunk, another person helped get your name tag and any medical information. In essence, we wanted to cover you completely before we even got started. Then a person guided you to an area where many others like you stood, nervously looking around, and thinking, NOW WHAT? Or, if you were anything like me, you just wanted to bolt. But something happened, something wonderful, you calmed down, and things got better. You got to know the folks at your table, who to your delight were also your bunk mates. As you started to talk and share you all really got to know each other. WOW, these people were really neat, and for me, I was learning something to boot. Then Sunday came and it was time to go home, and that started to make me feel very alone.

Then I started grouping, which didn't last long. You know that part in the Grouping Rollo where the Rollista tells you that "sometimes the first group doesn't work out"? Well, that was written for me. Over and over it was written for me. I do group now and have been for a few years, and I don't feel so disconnected from this wonderful community anymore.

But this community is more than that. Living in the nether regions one can feel very isolated, but being involved in *this* community in *this* diocese is something else. Along with your grouping family this community

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has another way for us all to stay close. We have a communication system in place which helps us all keep in touch; it's called sdcursillo.org, which is the website. IF we have your correct address we can all keep in touch with you and you with us.

The website gives us updates, like when the Forward is ready for your viewing, or to announce when and where the next Ultreya is, but it's even more than that. When someone in our community was in a very bad auto accident outside of California, we were all kept informed as to his condition. Friends in this community traveled to his bedside to be there for him. When another of us within this community was diagnosed with a brain tumor we were all there either in prayer or in person. Some of us have even traveled half way around the world to help a "Friend in Christ" who is in need. Whatever the situation, joy or sorrow, the website helps keep this community informed.

What a glorious community we have here in the San Diego Diocese where we are truly here for each other.

For those of you who haven't found this website yet it's sdcursillo.org. Log on and see what's going on in the community, and remember to: Make a friend, be a friend, bring that friend to Christ and continue to show the love of Christ to all you meet.

God bless and Ultreya,

Victoria



Congratulations to Darryl Peralta and Tami Norcott, who will serve as Rector and Rectora for the Fall weekends!

The Fall Cursillo weekends will be held concurrently as a Co-Ed weekend, October 26-29, 2006.

A Cocinero's Prayer

Dear Lord,

So far today, I am doing pretty well.

I have not cussed, yelled at anybody, been grumpy nasty or selfish, burned anything, or done anything else to be ashamed of.

I am going to get out of bed in a few minutes and will need a lot more help after that.

Amen



Look for the next Forward in early August. Articles, calendar events and other materials are due (preferably in electronic format) *no later than July 28th*. Send to:

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The Accidental Evangelist A Witness Talk by Catherine Eckmann - 5/6/06

Hi, I'm Catherine Eckmann from St. David's Church. Sometimes I feel like an "accidental evangelist." I made that name up, because I like the way it sounds. You know, like the accidental tourist? I don't want to seem pushy, but to be ready to share my faith. Really, my path as an evangelist just seems to happen . . . not by my own hand, but by someone else's. One thing leads to another---it's a mystery to me.

Like the time I attended an evening performance of a play at Good Samaritan Church. As I was mingling with the crowd leaving their seats at the end, a woman bumped into me. She looked right at me with a desperate face and said, out of the blue, "I don't know what to do. Maybe I'll kill myself." I stopped in my tracks, as the crowd wandered past to their cars. Then I looked in her eyes, and knew I had to help. We talked a bit about hope and God's love, and I got her phone number. Behind the scenes, I was able to arrange for other people to help her, and they took it from there. That's how it often works. . . we step in, but then God takes over. After praying for her, I later thought, "Why me?" Why did she single me out? How did she know that someone close to ME had also made suicide threats? So I couldn't ignore this kind of cry for help. Was it accidental? Maybe. . . . And then there was that time in the St. Timothy's parking lot. A doctor friend mentioned that she'd been busy training breast cancer survivors to make visits to newly diagnosed women. The outreach program is called "Reach To Recovery", and is part of the American Cancer Society. I stopped, and remembered. Years before, I'd been the one visited by a volunteer. I'd even planned to help with that program when I got better, but had gotten busy. Wow, what a wake-up call! I prayed about it, and volunteered the next day. In fact, they accidentally sent the same woman who had visited ME to do their training interview. Boy, was she surprised! Was that coincidence? Now, I go to their homes, bringing practical information about breast cancer and treatment. They even get these nice handmade bags, which were sewn by a women's group.

As we talk, I really listen. . . because I care. We have that life and death experience in common. Some talk about how they're coping, and faith. That's a signal to me that it's OK to bring up God, and I ask if I can pray for them. No one has ever turned me down on that! I leave their homes, feeling like I HAVE been a channel for God's peace. I bring hope, by sharing and listening to their fear.

Chances to evangelize can even come from the animal kingdom. Do cats count? A while ago, my doctor friend was sent to Fallujah, Iraq. Many people offered to help her while she was away, but I got the e-mail. Could I take care of her two cats for 8 months? Now I'm a "cat" person, but the idea of two high-maintenance kitties in my bed, along with my own neurotic cat, needed some prayerful consideration. Again, I felt the hand of God in this. So of course, I said yes. This was my way of opening my heart, and my home, to two of God's furrer children. Didn't Jesus say that whatever kindness we do for the least of these, we do it for Him? Well. . .

The truth is, chances come along all the time for us to help out in some small way. We just have to be ready, to see the need . . . and respond. Sometimes it means saying "yes", when you could easily say "no." You might not set out to do it, but when the chance comes-- you just step forward. I've heard the call to do many things, both inside and outside of my parish. This year, I shopped for Christmas presents for a needy family adopted by my choir. And I sang Christmas carols with a group at Juvenile Hall. At Thanksgiving I served dinner to seniors, and recently cooked breakfast at the Interfaith Shelter. In February I helped host an Ecumenical Women's retreat at Camp Stevens. I could feel God's presence in all those places.

I've been reading from "On A Journey", a daily meditation by Tom Ehrich. He's an Episcopal priest, and a journalist. He wrote that, "God's call tends to be mundane and unsurprising. Mundane, in that it comes by such everyday avenues as phone call, e-mail, friend's request, or stranger's plea. Unsurprising, in that God's nudge is rarely what I expect, but once I contemplate its new direction, the call makes sense."

God always seems to be there helping, especially when I go out on a limb. I had been asked to write a spiritual meditation, for our daily Advent readings at church this year. But, what to write? I was stumped! A funny thing happened the night I sat down to write about my assigned scripture. The psalm was about how the Israelites prayed for God to shed his light on them, when all seemed in darkness. And lo and behold, the power went off in my house! After a few hours of the dark, I could really relate to people yearning for the light. How small I felt, in the pitch black universe, writing by the light of a camping lantern. The meditation just wrote itself, comparing my anxious feelings with the way we wait for the coming of Christ's light on Christmas. I ended it with, "I can't wait for God's power to come on!"

A few weeks ago, I was working late at my school when I saw another teacher looking kind of down. I don't know Marilyn well, so I could have just hurried home. Something told me to reach out, and I did. Evidently she's going through a divorce, and her self-esteem is pretty low. Her husband has found a younger, more beautiful woman. Marilyn's an atheist, so I showed God's love by action rather than Scripture. Just taking the time to listen to her, and offer my friendship, seemed to help. That night, I forwarded an uplifting e-mail poem about "beautiful women" by Audrey Hepburn. It spoke about the beauty of women, both inside and out. When I saw Marilyn the next time, she thanked me and seemed a little happier.

I really believe that it is the LITTLE things we do, that add up to being Christ's presence on earth. The kind word, the message of hope, and going a little out of your way for someone else. It's taking a risk, to give of yourself, but that's what Jesus wanted us to do.

I call myself an "accidental evangelist," but really it's not an accident. GOD taps all of us on the shoulder. Doors open all the time, with chances to reach out and touch someone. Sometimes I gulp at the prospect, because I don't know where this will lead. Recently a friend said that she could no longer volunteer at Rachael's House, which is a homeless shelter downtown. She was being sent to Kuwait. Without missing a beat, I blurted, "I could do that." I wasn't sure what the job was, but I was willing. Now monthly I bring dinner, like I did Monday, to the grateful women of Rachel's House. I knew I was doing the right thing, when one woman told me: "I'm really hungry. . . I haven't eaten all day." And it was 6:00 at night! At those times I am reminded that ". . . there but for the grace of God, go I!"

Sometimes being open to answering God's call can be a little scary. Like when you get put on the spot, and have to share your faith in public. When I got Jane Schuler's phone call last month, out of the blue, asking me to give this witness talk, I thought "Why me?" Everybody here is an evangelist, and most of you do more than I do. But then I remembered almost ten years ago, saying, "Here I am Lord, Send me." And here I am, the accidental evangelist. Won't you be one too?



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JUNE

- 10 Servant Community, 8:30 a.m., Good Sam's
- 10 Secretariat, 12:30 p.m., Good Sam's

JULY

- 6 Secretariat meeting, 6:30 p.m., Good Sam's
- 28 Deadline for August Forward (p. 2)

AUGUST

- 3 Secretariat, Good Sam's, 12:30 p.m.

Don't Forget!!

Servant Community Meeting
Saturday, June 10
8:30 am to Noon