

The Love Letter

Fall 2008

From the Episcopal Cursillo Community of Minnesota

The Convenor's Corner...

DE COLORES!!

In many ways Cursillo in Minnesota is at a crossroads and as we look ahead there are many things to ponder. I have been in touch with several other leaders involved with Cursillo movements. I have met the Eau Claire lay director and we have provided Palanca for their October weekend. I have spoken with the Episcopal Convenor from Nebraska and they are happy to have our candidates come there as well as give current Cursillistas team opportunities. I have had e-mail information from Eau Claire and have spoken to the leadership of the Lutheran weekends (Via de Cristo) and the United weekends (Unidos en Cristo).

All of us feel strongly that the Cursillo weekend has been important in our personal relationship with Christ and in our continuing involvement in our parishes and community. I have also spoken with several clergy and Cursillistas and they are positive but bring up concerns about our future.

One concern is that individuals have not come forward to help with committee work for Cursillo, or to serve on the Secretariat. The January 2007 weekend needed to call on members of the Secretariat to fill out the team when not enough individuals came forward to serve on the weekend. We have one clergy Secretariat position filled, but would like one more clergy member. We have an excellent and proficient treasurer, as well as a very capable *Love Letter* staff.

To keep in line with what other states are doing, we have attempted to expand the number of Secretariat positions. Currently we need more people; the six of us cannot do it alone. We need others to step forward, and we need your input on how to reach that goal.

People have stated that it is very difficult to get either team members or candidates to commit to a Thursday-Sunday Cursillo weekend. We are perhaps at a crossroads where we need to look at the length of a Cursillo weekend and whether clergy, team members or candidates would be more likely to commit to a different approach.

An option we are beginning to discuss is how we might develop some daylong journeys in Christianity to stimulate dedicated, inspired, Christian leaders. We have certainly seen people more willing to be involved in other one-day programs and that is something we want to seriously consider to “spark” a flame in the hearts of people. A one-day journey could spark further interest in attending a Cursillo weekend.

What are your thoughts about this idea? Would you be willing to be on a team for a one-day journey? Do you think people in your parish would come for such a day? Please contact me or other Secretariat members with your thoughts and ideas.

Many of you know the Praise song, *Now is the time to Worship*. Well, now is the time for action. It is time for our churches, our clergy, our denomination, our fellow Cursillistas to act. As our Cursillo cross states, *Christ is Counting on You*.

♥ Dick Guiton, Convenor

Episcopal Cursillo Secretariat 2008–2009

Secretariat Convenors

Dick Guiton, Convenor Mendota Heights, MN	651-454-1418 crguiton1418@comcast.net
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Assistant Convenor – Open

Secretariat Spiritual Directors

The Rev. Steve Judd Owatonna, MN	507-455-5348 swjudd@fedins.com
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Clergy position – Open

Secretariat Members

Sheila Faricy North Oaks, MN	651-483-9896 sfaricy@msn.com
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Cara Knittel Burnsville, MN	952-953-3609 cpknittel@yahoo.com
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Mary Lou Lamain, Treasurer Burnsville, MN	952-892-5058 mlamain@lindquist.com
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Ellie Voisin Plymouth, MN	763-559-8762 elliev2004@earthlink.net
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Secretary position – Open

Lay positions – 5 Openings

Fourth Day Palanca Coordinator

Jerry Harris 60444 – 272 nd Avenue Mantorville, MN 55955	507-635-5789 raharris@kmtel.com
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The Love Letter is a publication of
The Episcopal Cursillo Community of Minnesota
5224 Minnetonka Blvd., St. Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 952-929-2952
E-mail: mncursillo@kmtel.com
website: www.mncursillo.org
Fall 2008 issue date: October 2008
Newsletter publisher: Linda Storlie
Newsletter editor: Nickie Dillon

Next Secretariat Meeting:

Saturday, November 15, 2008
9:00–11:00 AM
Church of the Nativity, Burnsville
♥ *All are welcome!* ♥

The Episcopal Cursillo Community of Minnesota COMMITTEES

♥ **Communications Committee**

Ellie Voisin, Chair
Nickie Dillon
Jerry Harris
Bob Rupp
Linda Storlie

♥ **Leadership Committee**

The Rev. Alice Mae Applequist,
Chair
The Rev. Steve Judd
Dick Guiton
Mike Kramer
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Phyllis Langenfeld
Steve Linney
Lynda McPherson
Charlie Melcher

*Interested in working on a committee?
Call Dick Guiton at 651-454-1418.*

The National Episcopal Cursillo® contact info:

National Episcopal Cursillo office: necoffice@episcopalcursillo.org
Address: NEC Office, 914 Norman Alley, #12, Conway SC 29526-5151
Phone: 843-488-2956; Toll Free: 1-877-ULTREYA or 1-877-858-7392

National Episcopal Cursillo Council's Northcentral District Clergy Representative:

The Rev. Don Nesheim, 763-529-9097, dnesheim@earthlink.net

CROSSROADS and THE PATH OF THIS LOVE LETTER

This edition of *The Love Letter* focuses on the idea of Crossroads and how Crossroads relate to the Cursillo journey we walk as a Christian community. In the dictionary a crossroad has several definitions: a road that crosses another road, or one that runs transversely to main roads; a crossroad is a by-road. Crossroads is also defined as the place where roads intersect and a point at which a vital decision must be made.

As you read this *Love Letter*, you will again focus on how important an IDEAL in our faith journey is. The importance of PIETY, STUDY, and ACTION in our day-to-day Christian Life is reemphasized. Perhaps it is that piety, study, and action not only help us in our day-to-day lives, but also help us deal with the many crossroads that will come in our lives.

Our Convenor and Secretariat bring to light some of the concerns and struggles we face as a Cursillo Community, and there are some short reflections for you to think about, namely quotations, song lyrics and a poem. As you read this *Love Letter*, we ask you to think of all you read with the knowledge that God loves us and has a plan for our lives. He calls us to enter into relationship with Him and with one another so we can experience His love and grace and find His calling for each of us.

IDEAL (*Edited excerpt from a rollo given by Cara Knittel*)

We humans live by and are free to choose our ideals. Animals don't have ideals to live by. Only *imaginary* animals have ideals. Perhaps you are familiar with the story of Jonathon Livingston Seagull. Jonathon did not want to just swoop over garbage piles and fight over rotting food. He dreamed of flying in ways that no seagull had ever flown before. He had visions of soaring like an eagle. Fantasies like these are a reflection of our human recognition of what it is to have an ideal, of what an ideal can mean in our lives, and of what an ideal is.

So, then, what is an ideal? The dictionary defines ideal as a standard; a measure of perfection. An ideal is defined as a person; someone who is a model for us, someone we might wish to imitate. An ideal is a goal; something we strive to reach.

We choose both our ideal and our actions for attaining it. An ideal involves setting goals and objectives, and becomes the center of our goals.

An ideal is *attractive* — it motivates us and is something to be desired and sought after. An ideal also *represents our values* — we feel it is worth working for.

Part of being human is our movement toward something we feel is of value, something worthwhile.

Each of us has goals. Each of us has an ideal. Having an ideal is basic to our development as a human being. Our life is a reflection of our ideal, is shaped and characterized by that ideal, and shows us what kind of person we are!

It is important to know our ideal, for without knowing our ideal we are likely to wander aimlessly. We will be like a sailor without a good sturdy boat, like a sailor with no compass and no idea of how to determine our direction. When we have an ideal that fits our life and values, that is attainable and motivates us, we are a different person. We will have our good sturdy boat, and it will support us. We will have the compass we need for determining our life's direction.

Have you discovered your ideal? Consider what it would be like if your ideal were like a boat:

- ♥ Will you be motivated to build the best boat?
- ♥ Can you get access to the information required for learning the skills necessary to build and sail the boat?
- ♥ Will you be determined and persistent in building the boat?
- ♥ Will you enjoy learning how to sail the boat after it is built?
- ♥ If your ideal were a boat, where would your boat take you after you built it?

Take time to think about your ideal. Discover your own ideal by asking yourself these questions:

- ♥ How and where do I center my thoughts?
- ♥ What do I think about most often?
- ♥ What do I do with my free time?
- ♥ What do I enjoy doing?
- ♥ What do I find challenging? ...and, yes...
- ♥ What do I spend my money on?

Be honest, and have faith in yourself. Think about these questions and discover *your* ideal.

PLINK, PLONK, PLUNK

One of the tapes played during the Alpha program has a wonderful story about the relationships of faith. It is through finding and living our Christian ideal and through piety, study, and action that we grow in our faith, in our relationship with God, and in our relationship with other Christians.

The story goes like this:

A man was sitting and listening to a small child plunk-plunking on the piano. *Plink, plonk, plunk.* The sounds grew increasingly irritating to him, and yet the child continued. *Plonk, plunk, plink.* As the grinding sounds continued, all of a sudden a man walked over and sat down at the piano with the little girl and started filling in the spaces between the plinking and plonking with a beautiful, lovely, haunting melody. The man who had been so irritated found beauty in this song the man and child created together. He later learned that the man was the child's father, Alexander Borodin, a Russian composer who wrote the well-known opera *Prince Igor*. The father in the story filled in the spaces between the plinks and the plonks of his child and it was beautiful because they were in relationship with one another.

The point of that story, I believe, is essential to our growth as Christians. We go on a journey of discovery. We *study* and we read the Bible because it is the story of God's relationship with His people. We can see how other people in other ages reacted to God's word and message for them. It is the story of God's relationship with us.

In scripture, God shows his involvement in the lives of his people; in scripture, God tells us what he wants of us, how we should react to and treat others. But above all, through Jesus Christ, we learn about the Kingdom of God and how to *act* here and now as inheritors of God's Kingdom.

The message is simple, yet so powerful: God loves us. All of us. No exceptions. God loves you and God loves me. That is God's grace to us. God is continually giving love, and we enter into relationship with God to understand that love in our lives. And then through our *piety* we live a life of grace in a conscious, growing, and shared manner.

PIETY (*Edited excerpt from the rollo given by Anita Pfauth at the June 2004 Cursillo*)

PIETY is living a life of grace in a conscious, growing and shared manner.

God has invited you and me into a relationship with Him. Jesus told the Pharisees that the greatest commandment is to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." What it comes down to is knowing, loving and living Christ. This is our Faith journey. As Paul told the Philippians, "Have no anxiety about anything, but *in everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Three elements are necessary to *spiritual* growth: piety, study, and action. We need all three.

Practicing piety leads us to want to know more about God — causing us to study. We learn from God to serve others — action — which will deepen our love and commitment to God (back to piety). PIETY is *living a life of grace in a conscious, growing and shared manner.*

DISCOVERY...Another Way of Looking at STUDY (*Excerpt from a talk given by Linda Storlie at a Charis weekend at the Federal Correctional Institution in Waseca. In the prison, the talk we know as Study is called Discovery.*)

I am a lay person, and the title of this talk is *Discovery: Why Study and Why Read the Bible?* When I started preparing this talk, one of the thoughts that kept repeating itself to me over several days was, "Well, that's kind of a dry topic — Why study and why read the Bible? The answer, though, is pretty straightforward. The Christian life is an ongoing journey of discovery. It is an ongoing journey of learning and growing and deepening our relationship with Jesus. The knowledge of God's love for us kindles a lifelong commitment to discovering more about the person of Jesus in order to make our pilgrimage into the presence of God's perfect love. The evidence of God's love for us is all around, but if we don't train ourselves to look for it, we may never see or really experience God's love. Jesus is not lost or hidden. He awaits our invitation to enter into our lives. We discover more about Jesus and about our relationship with him through study.

ACTION (*Edited excerpt from the rollo given at Cursillo #31 by Georg West III*)

Action is an expression of our desire to share God's love. All of us are called to a personal conversion marked by a fundamental change in the direction of our lives. God wants us to live our Christianity in our daily lives. He calls us to change our attitudes, our way of life, and to include Him in our everyday activities.

A person who accepts this life has a greater love, understanding and compassion for family, co-workers and friends. This overall Christian attitude and direction in life greatly affects all of one's relationships with others. In reality, all relationships with others are summed up in God's words to Cain: "Where is your brother; what have you done to your brother?" (Genesis 4:9).

When our motivations for action are elevated and empowered by grace for the spreading of God's kingdom, our evangelistic efforts become apostolic, beyond everyday human actions that are motivated by friendship, brotherhood and neighborliness. Our action

— or to say it another way, our evangelization efforts, by God’s design — are tied into His plan of salvation. For example, God chose Moses to lead the Israelites to freedom. At first, Moses didn’t feel worthy to be the Lord’s instrument. He did not believe that he was the right person for such an enormous task. However, after experiencing God’s love, he wanted to take on the responsibility, respond positively to God’s will, and become the leader to save his people. We too take on the responsibility of being God’s messengers, and bringing the Good News to all of our brothers and sisters wherever we are.

We are the Church and by virtue of our baptism and confirmation, we are obliged to be the bearers and messengers of the Good News. We have found and experienced the love of God and we want to bring God’s love, as we know it, to the rest of the world.

God gives us His grace to accomplish our work; we do not have to do it alone. We are united to Christ by grace. The proclamation of the Christian message transforms people; we begin to change our attitudes and actions and, in turn, we bring about change in all of the structures and environments in which we live. We could jump out and go into our little corners of the world and try to make them more Christ-like. We may even have some success.

There is, however, a specific method of evangelization that will help us to be more effective as evangelizers in our families, work places and social settings. This method involves a three-step process: make a friend, be a friend, bring your friend to Christ. It is that simple.

We must act in Christ. We all know that Jesus is already inside each person that we try to evangelize. Our role is to be a friend, and to try, as Jesus did in His life, to have others open their hearts to Him. We have to help everyone understand that they too have been redeemed by Christ.

Like Christ — I must act with the qualities of Jesus. I must give witness to my life in Christ. I must show that I am trying to live the life that I am talking about. Jesus was a witness to His preaching. Am I? Do I really believe what I am proclaiming? Do I live what I believe?

We are the messengers and proclaimers of the Good News.

JOG: THE JOY OF GIVING

Would you believe that it is time for the Christmas Cursillo JOG letter? We do like to get it out early so that it ends up in the “to do” pile before all the bills

start coming in. We need more than money, though. We need your time and effort if Cursillo is going to continue in Minnesota. We need your creativity and talents. We need you to practice what you learned during your weekend, on teams and beyond.

Are you in any sort of Christian-based small group? If you are in a group, has that group helped with coffee hour or the Vacation Bible School, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, given rides to those in need, or countless other things? **That is called ACTION.**

Have you been praying for our Secretariat? Are you praying for wisdom for the relationship of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion and vice versa? Have you been praying for a deeper and more personal relationship with Christ? **That is called PIETY.**

Are your mind, eyes, ears and time focused on the computer screen or on the cell phone or TV? Is that helping you learn more about how you can be the only Christ that some people will ever see? Are you reading, meditating and doing things that help you grow in your faith life? **That is called STUDY.**

Do you have a reunion/renewal group that will help you with Piety, Study and Action? We need to seek these routes on our spiritual journey, not to sustain Cursillo, but to fulfill the Great Commission with our Cursillo-oriented tools. All these activities are part of our giving to ourselves and others.

Yes, we need money as well. We do have ongoing expenses such as this Love Letter, insurance, telephone, contribution to our national organization, our state charter, etc. We will spend about \$50 on returned *Love Letters* from this mailing because an address is not valid. Weekends are also expensive to hold.

Will we use your money wisely? We will! You can help us in our efforts by becoming active as a member of the Secretariat (we used to call it the Council) or by being on a committee. We are especially looking for people with previous leadership experience as Rollistas, Rectorsa and Rectoras, team members, and Spiritual Leaders.

Please send us information on your willingness to serve and please contribute to the Episcopal Cursillo Community of Minnesota, 5224 Minnetonka Boulevard, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

BLESSINGS, ULTREYA and DE COLORES,

♥ The Minnesota Episcopal Cursillo Secretariat
♥ Dick Guiton, Convenor

AT A CROSSROAD: Food for Thought

“We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow humans. When we mentally deny this reality, we actually live less, in essence contribute to our own spiritual and even physical deaths.” ~ Herman Melville

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” ~ Mahatma Gandhi

“When you come to the edge of all the light you know, and are about to step off into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing one of two things will happen: there will be something to land on, or you will discover the ability to somehow prevail and triumph.” ~ Anonymous

“No matter how dark things seem to be or actually are, raise your sights and see the possibilities — they’re always there.” ~ Norman Vincent Peale

“The caterpillar thought that it had reached the end of its world. Then, it turned into a butterfly.” ~ Author unknown

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

by Robert Frost ♥ Reflections by Linda Storlie

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

In this poem Robert Frost seems to write about some of the important issues in a person’s life: about choices, decisions, and different paths we might take on our journeys. As you read this poem, how do you feel about some of the paths you have taken in your life? Or paths you didn’t take? What difference has the road you have taken made in your life? Many times in our faith journey we seem to not slow down enough to see what is around us. I work with students in grades 8 and 9 and often see the young people wanting life to move rapidly along, and sometimes so much so that they forget to slow down enough to see the present. As I have grown older, and hopefully wiser, I have realized that life is full of many paths, twists, turns and forks in the road, and that there are many choices, decisions and commitments that we must make. I now know there is more than one speed in life, and sometimes we may run into speed bumps.

Where are we going with Cursillo? How should we spread the message that we serve an awesome God who loves us? In what ways can we develop our leadership skills to be lights in our communities and parishes? What paths and roadways will we take on our spiritual journey? The paths we choose make us who we are as individuals. Whatever road we take, we will open new doors. Wherever we go, let us Shout to the Lord! ♥ Linda Storlie

PRAISING THROUGH SONG

Along our spiritual journey in life, we make choices of how we will live our lives. Are those choices shaping us into the people God wants us to become? Will we live and will we act in ways that show Christ lives in us?

Sanctuary

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
Pure and holy, tried and true;
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You.

When He comes in
Shouts of glory
And our time on
Earth is done,
How I long to
Hear Him saying,
"Faithful servant,
Well done."

And If I'm Holy,
As you are Holy,
Someday I'll see you,
Face to face.
Melt and mold me,
Into your image,
And take me to your
Holy Place.

by John W. Thompson & Randy L. Scruggs

Shout To The Lord

My Jesus, my Saviour
Lord there is none like You
All of my days, I want to praise
The wonders of Your mighty love.

My comfort, my shelter
Tower of refuge and strength,
Let every breath, all that I am
Never cease to worship You.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing
Power and majesty, praise to the King.
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name.

I sing for joy at the work of Your hands.
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand.
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You.

by Darlene Zschech

♥ ULTREYA! ONWARD! ♥

CURSILLO COMMUNITY MESSAGES

- ♥ **The Cursillo Secretariat (leadership group) is seeking new members —**
If you are interested in serving your Cursillo community in this important way, contact Dick Guiton at 651-454-1418 or rcguiton1418@comcast.net
- ♥ **Help Wanted: Web Designer** — We are looking for someone to do a design makeover of our website. The information is current and complete, but we'd like to give the site a fresh, new look. This is a one-time volunteer opportunity. Contact Rose Harris at raharris@kmtel.com or 507-635-5789.
- ♥ **Cursillo Church Coordinators** — We need to know who is the Cursillo contact coordinator in your parish. Please contact Rose Harris at raharris@kmtel.com or 507-635-5789 with information.
- ♥ **Information Updates Wanted** — Please send notifications to the Cursillo office or website for: Change of address or winter address ♥ Cursillistas entering the 5th Day ♥ How you wish to receive *The Love Letter*

♥ Ultreyas ♥

"Ultreya" means *onward*. It strengthens our understanding and reinforces our faith.

For further information, see the article "About Ultreyas and Group Reunions"
in the Summer 2008 issue of *The Love Letter*, at www.mncursillo.org

Please send notice of Episcopal Ultreyas to: MnCursillo@kmtel.com

To receive e-mail announcements of upcoming Ultreyas, send your e-mail address to mncursillo@kmtel.com or visit the Cursillo website www.mncursillo.org for Ultreya announcements.

Feel free to attend any and all Ultreyas you can!!

Episcopal Cursillo Community of Minnesota
5224 Minnetonka Boulevard
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone: 952-929-2952
www.mncursillo.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Your Attention, Please!!

In the interest of being good stewards of our resources, **our goal is to distribute *The Love Letter* electronically to as many people as possible.** Please let us know your mailing preference below.

If you have Internet access, you may e-mail your preference to www.MnCursillo@kmtel.com or you may go to the Cursillo website at www.mncursillo.org, click on the link "Name & Address Change" and then enter your mail preference under the "New Information" section.

You may also mail a copy of this form to the Cursillo Office at:
5224 Minnetonka Blvd., St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Please send me *The Love Letter* by regular mail.

Please send me *The Love Letter* by e-mail. My e-mail address is: _____

Please remove my name from *The Love Letter* mailing list.

Name: _____

Address: _____

NOTE: The Post Office does not forward *The Love Letter* (Third Class mail) and for each returned copy we pay a 42¢ Return Service charge. If you go away for extended periods, we would like to send you *The Love Letter* via e-mail (see above). If you are going away for an extended time but want to continue receiving *The Love Letter* by regular mail, please send us the following info each time you go away:
Name ♥ Old address / phone # ♥ New address / phone # ♥ Dates new info will be in effect