

The Love Letter

Spring 2007

From the Episcopal Cursillo Community of Minnesota

The Theme of This Love Letter...

At the closing of the three-day Cursillo weekend, known as the *Clausura*, the lay rector(a) of the weekend tells the candidates that in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, Paul compared the church to the human body and said that although it is made up of many parts, it is still a single body. He also said that whenever one part is glorified, all the parts share in its praise. Keeping that analogy in mind, this issue of *The Love Letter* will focus on the parts and the whole of a Cursillo as well as on our connection to the National Episcopal Cursillo Movement.

The Cursillo weekend has 15 talks, but there is really only one talk, divided into fifteen parts. This one talk, like the weekend, can be organized into three parts:

1. What is fundamental to being a Christian?

Friday: the day we learn what the Christian ideal is. The talks present the importance of having an ideal, accepting God's free gift of grace, belonging to the Christian community, and living the life of grace through piety.

The talks given are: Ideal, Grace, Laity, Faith, and Piety.

2. How do I live the life of Grace?

Saturday: the day we learn how to be formed into Christian leaders. The talks stress the need for study, piety, and action; the need for meeting Christ in the Sacraments; and how the person who works to grow as a Christian can and should become a Christian leader.

The talks given are: Study, Sacraments, Action, Obstacles to a Life in Grace, and Leaders.

3. How do I structure my Christian life?

Sunday: the day we learn a strategy for the renewal of society. The talks present the need

to study our environments, work with one another to change these environments and bring them to Christ; with the help of a spiritual director, develop and practice a Rule of Life, share with one another in Group Reunion and Ultreya, work within the Christian community, and persevere with the help of God's Grace.

The talks given are: Environments, The Christian Life in Grace, The Christian Community in Action, Group Reunion, and Ultreya.

The Servant community of the weekend is made up of the spiritual directors, the leadership and music teams, those who give talks (rollistas) and those who are table leaders, the prayer support (Palanca team), the runners and organizers (Fourth Day team), and the body nourishers (Kitchen team).

† † †

How we live our lives in our parishes and our communities is the focus of a Cursillo. What have we taken away from our weekend Cursillo experience that we can carry into our lives and our parishes? Are we involved in some kind of renewal group? What are we doing to bring others to Christ?

† † †

NEW BEGINNINGS:

This is the beginning of a new day. You have been given this day to use as you will. You can waste it or use it for good. What you do today is important because you are exchanging a day of your life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever; in its place is something that you have left behind. Let it be something good.

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Website Reminder

The website for Episcopal Cursillo Community of Minnesota is: **www.mncursillo.org**

This website enables us to use resources more efficiently and to provide better and easier communication. *The Love Letter* will eventually be distributed primarily by e-mail with notification by a postcard that it is ready for reading. Currently we have 363 e-mail addresses versus 1,496 distributed by mail. You can help us save printing and mailing costs by choosing e-mail distribution.

To receive *The Love Letter* via e-mail, go to the Cursillo website at **www.mncursillo.org**, click on the link “Name & Address Change” and then select “Love Letter Delivery: Email.”

The same website page can be used to change other personal address information. If your e-mail address becomes invalid, you simply need to change it.

Your e-mail address will be used **only** for alerting you when the newsletter or special information is available. **It will not be provided to any other organization.**

The Love Letter is available in Web (.HTML) view and Adobe (.PDF) view. These two views are organized differently to make them more easily navigated; the .PDF view is more attuned to obtaining a printed copy of *The Love Letter*.

The website is organized this way:

- ~ Cursillo – What is it?
- ~ *The Love Letter* (both .HTML and .PDF versions of the document)
- ~ Calendar Events
- ~ Applications & Forms
- ~ Secretariat
- ~ Other Cursillo Web Links

The Episcopal Cursillo Community of Minnesota has a new e-mail address:
MnCursillo@kmtel.com
 Use this address to communicate with the Cursillo Office via e-mail.



LEADERSHIP ROLES

Each member of the team is referred to as a leader because each one has some influence on the candidates. As written in *The Fundamental Ideas of Cursillo*, "When we speak of leaders we speak of all who form the team because all are required to give the same living witness, the same commitment, enthusiasm, and life. Some proclaim the message in the talks, but all must proclaim it and incarnate it in their lives. There are no different categories of leaders, only different functions."

Rectora's Reflection on Cursillo #32

Vicki Kramer, Ascension Episcopal Church, Stillwater

Hello to all and many thanks to those who stayed with us through the lengthy process that became Cursillo Weekend #32, January 2007. What an amazing time of growth and renewal – new friends, new talents, renewed strength, renewed spirits.

As I take time to reflect on all that has happened over the past year, I am amazed at how dedicated this team remained to seeing the weekend through to success. There was a lot of worry and sweat over the months, and as we got closer to the weekend, I still wondered how everything would roll out on Thursday. Our Spiritual Directors were put to the test and delivered rollos that seemed to speak to everyone present. The lay rollos were awesome and filled with Christ's love and action. The weekend proved to be transforming for us all. We were not big on team members, but we were strong on commitment and spirit.

The Holy Spirit came quietly on Thursday and began the work slowly and surely through Friday. The Stations of the Cross on Friday evening gave us all time to reflect and consider how we have – or have not – made Christ the center of our lives. Individual tables began to develop their own personalities. Saturday afternoon it became obvious to me that the candidates had "taken over" the weekend and were making it theirs. Candidates were able to go for walks in the falling snow and enjoy the fresh air. Sunday began with a wonderful

serenade led by team and Fourth Day folks. The service at the Clausura was uncomplicated and simple and gave the candidates and Fourth Day people time to join together in praise and song and witness to Christ's presence in our lives.

Comments from the candidates at the Apostolic Hour and at the Clausura confirmed to all that we had succeeded in providing an environment where 19 individuals came on Thursday evening and left on Sunday as new friends and acquaintances closer to understanding their responsibilities as Christians.

I pray that as these candidates return to their home parishes they will be encouraged to join study groups, to participate in Ultreyas and future Cursillo weekends. As members of the Fourth Day, it is our obligation to follow through in the task of including these new members in these Cursillo events.

Again, thank you to the leadership team for the weekend, our spiritual directors, our musicians, for their guidance, support, and counsel; to all team rectors and team members who stayed with the weekend over the year and those who came on board with short notice. My life is richer and more grounded in God's grace and love than I could ever have imagined or thought possible through the work we accomplished together. May God bless us all with love and grace and friendship in this New Year.

Cursillo Connections

Rev. Alice Mae Applequist, Canon IX priest, Chatfield

The National Episcopal Cursillo Seminar 2006 was held in Kansas City, Mo. It began on Thursday, October 12, and concluded on Sunday, October 15. There were delegates and Fourth Day members from several of the Provinces of the Episcopal Church. There were approximately 200 people present for the weekend. In addition to the many lay members, priests and deacons in attendance, there were also bishops. This was very uplifting to the discussions and to the worship services.

The gathering was filled with opportunities for those attending to share successes, concerns and to just brainstorm about many issues facing the Cursillo movement within each diocese, as well as nationally. Some of the concerns centered around finances, leadership training, appeal for clergy involvement, communications between and among Cursillo communities and the problems created by the physical size of each of the provinces. What was positive for those of us coming from Minnesota, was finding out that many of the other communities were dealing with the same kinds of problems and stresses that we were. This was healthy in that we were then able to come back with some possible better ways of addressing things within our community. It also allowed us to see that some problems were not just local problems but national issues. These problems included a difficulty in filling teams, training teams and getting candidates.

The seminar began with offering a “Seminar 101.” This session was offered to help first-time attendees understand why there is a yearly seminar, what the General Council is, and who the NECC is and what they do. For example, it was interesting how many of the attendees did not know that NECC stands for National Episcopal Cursillo Committee.

In addition to this session, four additional sessions were offered for people to deepen their understanding about specific Cursillo topics. These sessions were: (1) Walking With the Lord: Up Close and Personal; (2) Dynamics of Leadership; (3) Checking Your Spiritual Meter; and (4) Everything You Wanted to Know About Cursillo.

Michael Kramer, Dawnlynn Greeney and I, the Rev. Alice Mae Applequist, were able to attend this seminar. The Rev. Don Nesheim was also in attendance and was voted to be the North Central District Representative. With there being four of us there, two of us were able to be at each of the workshops.

In addition to the workshops, our time was filled with business meetings, district meetings, worship services, and, of course, social time. This kind of schedule was helpful in that it allowed for issues to be raised, viewpoints to be shared, issues to be celebrated and prayed about, and social time to further discuss with those that you wanted to hear and learn more from. Some things discussed were issues around liability insurance, leadership training, bringing new life to the community – i.e., renewal opportunities and ultreyas, training events in general that might be done by district or province, understanding Cursillo as “call” and “mission” and remembering that Cursillo needs to be a combined path and passion for both lay and clergy.

Any Fourth Day member can attend the National Episcopal Community Seminar. It is held once a year. The location of the event changes each year. In 2007 the Seminar will be held in Colorado. Our Diocese is allowed one voting delegate. Our Secretariat selects who will be our delegate each year. If you would like to be considered as our delegate, please submit your name to a member of the Secretariat.

PALANCA

Palanca literally means a “lever.” It is used in Cursillo to mean an outward expression, through prayer or sacrifice, of our Christian love. Palanca is based first of all in prayer, and only then can palanca be expressed through the tangible symbols. Palanca received during the weekend is a sign of faith of others for the participants of the weekend. Palanca is a free gift of prayerful love through which we may see not only other Christians’ care for us, but also God’s care. The prayer support of the weekend comes from the Palanca team which prays for candidates and speakers, for the prayer needs that are requested during the weekend. The Palanca team prepares for Eucharists, leads the Stations of the Cross and the serenade.

De Colores, Everyone!

One of the things that everyone likes best about the Cursillo weekend are the surprises. Just when you think that you understand what the weekend is about and how it will unfold, a surprise happens that brings you to a new level of understanding and guides you to look deeper into the heart of God.

In everyday life, surprises happen as well. But, unlike the Cursillo weekend, they are not always happy surprises. Sometimes, just when you think you have the course of your life mapped out – BOOM – a major detour confronts you. Rarely do we expect the surprises of illness or loss, and yet they are as much a part of human life as the surprises of love, recovery and good fortune.

When surprises come my way, the first thing I know I need to do is to accept them for what they are. That can be very hard when the surprise is difficult and not part of my desire for my life or that of someone I love. But I have learned from experience that to ignore, deny, blame or avoid the surprise does no good and can make things worse. To accept the reality of the surprise is the best way to begin to deal with it. Then you can start weaving it into the framework of your life.

Learn what you can from the experience of the surprise. Watch for what God may want you to learn. Talk to other people about it. You never know where help and insight will come from. It was just three weeks after my friend Debbie, her husband and family moved to Texas that she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. What an

awful surprise! Through months of treatment and finally surgery she dealt with the reality of the disease as best she could. Finally she could start driving again and going out on her own. She felt ugly and self-conscious because she was so thin and had a big scar at the base of her neck. She went into a nearby convenience store to pick up a few groceries. Just as she went to stand in line to check out, a big burly cowboy type cut in ahead of her. He didn’t even notice me, she thought, feeling invisible. The cowboy paid for his groceries and then turned around and looked at her. “Don’t worry,” he said to her, looking her straight in the eye. “It’ll fade. See?” He then pulled open the collar of his cowboy shirt and showed her the barely visible scar at the base of his neck.

I find that support from others who have been through something like I am going through as well as companionship with people I trust greatly strengthen my capacity to deal with the blow of a difficult surprise. This is where being part of the Cursillo Fourth Day and Ultreya community can make all the difference. Sharing good and bad surprises is part of what Christian communities are all about. Learning from each other, growing in understanding, helping each other – these are ways we can see God at work in our lives and be strengthened for the journey. With others following the model that Jesus set for us, we all travel together deeper into the heart of God.

Ultreya!

The Rev. Neysa Ellgren

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Plymouth

“God’s Wings”

An article in *National Geographic* several years ago provided an interesting picture of God’s wings. After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno’s damage.

One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he gently touched it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother’s wings.

The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. Though the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. She had been willing to die so those under the cover of her wings would live.

“He shall cover you with his pinions, and you shall find refuge under his wings; his faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler.” (Psalm 91:4)

Being loved this much should make a difference in your life. Remember the One who loves you, and then be different because of it.

<http://www.weiady.org/illustrations.htm#GOD’S>

KITCHEN TEAM

The Kitchen team has a specific function of ministry for the whole weekend – not only preparing and serving each meal, but doing so as an essential gift, in love and humor. The Kitchen team also teaches *De Colores*, a traditional folk song that is well-known throughout the Spanish-speaking world. The words of the song are an expression of joy and a celebration of all creation with its many bright colors.

From a writing of the French-Speaking Cursillo in Canada comes this explanation of De Colores:

De Colores is a Spanish expression which means ***in colours***. If there are sad moments in life, there are also others when we see everything in colour. This is the case of a person who discovers that he or she is loved by the very person that he or she loves. For lovers, everyday life loses its sadness, the sun shines, life is beautiful, and we see it through rose-coloured spectacles.

In the same way, the realization that we are being loved by God, in a way that is unparalleled and unconditional, creates in our inner self a feeling that is like an incredible rainbow. After this experience, life is not the same; we have a new vision of the world, we act differently and we discover, in the

Christian community, the many faces of Christ.

Indeed, as a prism decomposes white light in a scale of various colours, so do those who are around us. Everyone of us has a different colour, each one reflects an aspect of Christ.

The “De Colores” calls forth this joy caused by the discovery of God’s love and the presence of Christ in ourselves and in others. It comes from a song! That song, borrowed from the Mexican folklore, expresses the joy of living and exalts the beauties of creation. It was readily adopted by the first Cursillistas as a reflection of their inner feelings.

Favorite Recipes from Cursillo #32

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Cranberry Chicken

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Ingredients:

- ~ Chicken pieces (whatever you want)
- ~ 1 can cranberry sauce (14 oz), jellied or whole
- ~ 1 cup Russian Dressing
- ~ 1 envelope Lipton's Dry Onion Soup mix

Place chicken in a 9" × 13" pan.

Mix together in a bowl the cranberry sauce, dressing, and onion soup mix. Pour over chicken. Bake 45 minutes to 1 hour, uncovered.

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Potato Salad (a la Cursillo #32 style)

Requested by many, this recipe admittedly was mixed just by guess and by golly!

Ingredients: eggs, potatoes, mayonnaise, mustard, vinegar, chopped onion and celery

Boil 5 lbs. of potatoes with skins on until cooked (adjust amount of potatoes to how much potato salad you want). Remove from heat and cover in cold water to cool, or put in refrigerator to cool. Cool well or they will mush when you try to cube them.

While potatoes are cooking:

1. Boil 8-12 eggs; when cooked, finely chop them as if to make egg salad.
2. Finely chop medium onion (amount to your taste and desire for crunchiness); add to eggs.
3. Finely dice 4-5 pieces of celery stalk (more or less, to your taste); add to egg mix.
4. Add mayonnaise to make a sloppy egg salad.
5. Give a good squirt of mustard – any kind you like – about 2–3 Tablespoons.
6. Add a couple Tablespoons of white vinegar.

When potatoes are cooled, peel and cut them into cube pieces. Add the egg salad mixture and whatever more mayonnaise you need to get the consistency you want. Mix until blended.

Tastes best when refrigerated overnight!

“The Atheist Man and the Christian Bear”

An Atheist was walking through the woods. “What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!” he said to himself.

As he was walking alongside the river, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him. He turned to look. He saw a 7-foot grizzly charging toward him. He ran as fast as he could up the path. He looked over his shoulder and saw that the bear was closing in on him. As he ran, he looked over his shoulder again, and the bear was even closer. He tripped and fell on the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up, but saw that the bear was right on top of him, reaching for him with his left paw and raising his right paw to strike him. At that instant the Atheist cried out, “Oh, my God!”

Time stopped. The bear froze. The forest was silent. As a bright light shone upon the man, a voice came out of the sky.

“You deny my existence for all these years, teach others I don’t exist and even credit creation to cosmic accident. Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?”

The atheist looked directly into the light. “It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask You to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps You could make the BEAR a Christian?”

“Very well,” said the voice.

The light went out. The sounds of the forest resumed. And the bear dropped his right paw, brought both paws together, bowed his head and spoke: “Lord, bless this food, which I am about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord, Amen.”



MUSIC TEAM

An integral part of the weekend is the music that is sung: music that is soft and reflective such as “Abba, Father” and music that makes you want to dance such as “When the Saints Go Marching In.” Who will ever forget the angelic voices from heaven singing from *Las Mananitas*, “How beautiful is this morning and our hearts are light and gay/ As we sing God’s song of blessing to awaken you today.” The rector at the closing service identifies the Music team as the soul of the whole team, bringing to mind these words: “Then sings my soul my Savior God to thee/ how great Thou art/how great Thou art.”

De Colores is sung during the weekend after its introduction in the Rollo Room.

De Colores is a Spanish folk song in which the beauty of God’s creation is celebrated. One of the beauties of nature viewed after a storm was a rooster, resplendent in color. According to the story, the people began to sing and shout “De Colores” and rejoice, praising God and rejoicing in the shining colors of the newly washed countryside and a little rooster. An English translation of one of the verses reads:

De Colores, living colors so brilliant and subtle
that greet every morning,
De Colores, living colors reflecting the
sunshine that brightens each dawning,
De Colores, living colors as graceful and
peaceful as God’s shining dove,
That’s the reason I like all the colors that
brighten the life of the things that I love!

The rooster, or cock, appears in song, in literature, in folk tales, in art and architecture through the ages. During the Middle Ages, the cock was an important Christian symbol of resurrection and vigilance. A rooster represented God, goodness, and light. Roosters or cock vanes appeared at the top of buildings, domes, and church steeples. There are roosters carved into the stonework of several medieval cathedrals in Europe.

Cocks crowed at the birth and death of Christ, and they herald the dawn, perhaps rousing us to worship God in our daily life. The following writing, “Spiritual Remorse and Vigilance,” talks about some of the symbolism and the role of the rooster. The source is: Tucker, Suzetta. “ChristStory Rooster Page.” *ChristStory Christian Bestiary*. 1997. <http://ww2.netnitco.net/users/legend01/rooster.htm> (8 Mar. 2007).

“Spiritual Remorse & Vigilance”

In Christian symbolism, the rooster is a familiar Passion symbol. Prior to being arrested by the soldiers, Jesus correctly predicted that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed on the following morning. At the rooster’s crowing, Peter remembered Jesus’s words and “went out and wept bitterly” (Matthew 26:75; see also Matthew 26:34-75; Mark 14:30-72; Luke 22:34-61; John 13:38-18:27). The rooster represents Peter’s denial of Christ and also stands for his remorse and repentance upon hearing the rooster’s crow. Because Peter later became the leader of the early Church, the rooster represents papal vigilance.

In many cultures, the rooster’s habit of crowing at the dawning of each new morning made it a symbol of the daily victory of light over darkness and the triumph of good over evil. This habit, along with its fiery comb, made the rooster the symbol of fire; the sun; and Christ, the light of the world, who announces an end to spiritual darkness and despair. In the Far East, the rooster was painted on the doors of houses to drive off evil spirits.

During the Middle Ages, the rooster became a popular Christian image on weathervanes, also known as weathercocks. Its crowing made it

an emblem of the Christian's attitude of watchfulness and readiness for the sudden return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment of humankind (Mark 13:32 and 13:35-36).

In many countries, roosters were sacrificed to the gods. Early Germans sacrificed roosters during their funeral rites. The Greeks believed a rooster guided the dead to the underworld where its crowing would awaken the souls to a new life. In the Orient, the Sun-god Attis had the rooster as a personal attribute to represent the myth that Attis had risen from the dead. In the West, the black rooster is the tool of Satan.

Because of its aggressiveness, the rooster has been used to symbolize the soldierly qualities of vigilance, courage, supremacy, and pride. It is the national emblem of France and an image of war.

This bird's aggressiveness and strutting have also caused it to be associated with base qualities such as arrogance, conceit, bossiness, lust, anger, bad temper, and frustrated desires.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotes are from the NKJV Bible.

ROLLO ROOM

Rollo literally means a "long boring talk." It has been used in Cursillo to refer to the talks given by both the clergy and the laity. The talks help one to look at his/her life and answer three questions: (1) What is fundamental to being a Christian? (2) How do I live the life of Grace? and (3) How do I structure my Christian Life?

THE ROLLOS

IDEAL: Everyone lives by ideals; this is what motivates us. What is my ideal? I can find out by discovering where my time, money, and thoughts go.

GRACE: Life in grace is the Christian ideal. Grace is the free gift of God. Life in grace results from a personal relationship with God.

LAITY: The Church is the community of those who live in grace, and is the channel of grace for the world. We are called to represent Christ and His church, and use the gifts given to us to carry on Christ's work.

FAITH: Faith is saying "yes" to God and receiving the gift of His Spirit which enables us to give ourselves entirely to him. The Holy Spirit is present and active in the community of believers and works through those who take the life of grace seriously.

PIETY: Piety is living life in grace, fully and unreservedly. It involves a life of prayer and a desire to bring Christ to others and others closer to Him. Piety is dedicating our lives to Christ.

STUDY: We need to grow in grace, to use our heads to learn how to be a Christian. We study to hear God's word speaking to us. The aim of our study is our own growth and our action in the world.

SACRAMENTS: It is possible to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We encounter Him through the sacraments. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Sacraments are special encounters with our Risen Lord, the means by which Christ is with us here and now.

ACTION: The life of grace is expressed in how we treat one another. The method of apostolic action is in the slogan: “Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ.”

OBSTACLES TO A LIFE IN GRACE: In living the life of grace, there are difficulties which we need to recognize and accept. Our clergy can help us in providing counsel and spiritual direction in our journey.

LEADERS: Jesus calls us to be leaders in our environments. Being a leader takes work, faith, humility, hope, and charity. Each of us becomes a leader when we center our personality and world upon Christ, when we are committed to action, to changing the world for Christ. We are called to fill God’s house unto the fullest.

ENVIRONMENTS: All around us are environments that we need to look at again in light of our relationship with God. We need to live and work and act effectively in those environments to change them and bring others to Christ.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN GRACE: Life in grace must be lived. Through piety we keep in

contact with Christ. Study and action need to be worked out by each person with the help of a spiritual guide. Life in Christ must be lived. The real world is where we are to love and serve the Lord.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION: Our calling is to find where our ministry is in the world, finding support from other Christians. With Christ in our hearts, there is much to celebrate, there are so many places and ways to transform the world. We are apostles in God’s great world.

GROUP REUNION: As we live in our world, we need to link up with other Christians to provide a backbone for our Christian lives. We draw strength through regular contact with other Christians who will support us in our walk. We know God is not finished with us yet.

ULTREYA: You can do it! Take Christ with you to change your environment. You are the person God wants to use. Spend time with your spiritual family – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Onward! “Shine, Jesus, Shine, fill this land with the Father’s Glory!”

Rollo #1, IDEAL

by Julie Remington, St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church, Roseville (edited for *The Love Letter*)

My topic is living with an ideal. An ideal in this case means “a supreme and worthy end or goal.” It is having a set of ideas, goals, a vision for what you aspire to do and become. You, and everyone who ever lived, have an ideal – you may be conscious of it, may have chosen it, or may not really be aware of the vision you have for yourself. It shows up in everyday life in who you are, lifestyle, hobbies, the friends and relationships you have, the work you do, where you live, what you love, where you spend your income and your time, what you imagine – even how you

solve problems and how you have fun. It shapes who you are and what you like.

The better you know your ideal and can articulate it to others, the clearer your life is, the clearer your decisions are. When you have decisions to make, when challenges come up, you can ask – does this direction fit with my ideal or not? So you figure out your ideal, then achieve it. Of course there are obstacles to achieving one’s ideal – prime examples are impatience, poor priorities, discouragement from others, fear of failure. We can’t control what happens to us, only our response.

Some ideals truly serve our highest good – keep us moving in a solid and meaningful direction. For most of us, influences change and our ideal shifts over time. Your ideal as a 25-year-old will not often be the same as when you are 50. An ideal may be rooted in place and time.

Your values may differ significantly from your parents' or siblings', or your children's! Then there are those who have influenced people's ideals worldwide. I think of people like Nelson Mandela or Gandhi who taught the world about nonviolent action against oppression, recognition of individual rights for all. Or the Dalai Lama and Mother Teresa, who teach the world about proactive compassion.

My son is in the Cub Scouts where their pledge is “to do my best to do my duty to God and my country, to help other people, and to obey the law of the pack.” He's starting to use this in day-to-day decisions like getting homework done right after school and bringing dishes to the table. It is a guidepost that helps him to decide on a higher course of action – he is part of the pack and every time they meet, he pledges to help others and obey the law of the pack. This is their group ideal.

I recognize that living with our ideal is not necessarily easy. For me, it's always been very important to inspire and lift up others, to help them reach their potential. For the past 9 years I worked in a state government agency (where) I had very limited opportunities to support others' development and learning. Over the past year, I worked through my priorities, and realized that the balance of doing work that better matched who I am and my values and ideal would be well worth potential loss of income. Two months ago I started a new job that conducts spiritually based workshops, conferences and events for the public. It is a tremendous transformation

to work with hope and motivation, aligned with my vision of grace in action.

Living with an ideal includes what we let go of. It takes will and courage to choose a different ideal that is more meaningful than the one you started out with. We can ask... Which ideal leads to peace, gives grace, extends us to our potential? What will sustain us when the going gets tough? What moves us toward wisdom? Energizes us? Amidst all that life encompasses, what is holy to you?

This is our unique ability, a great gift – we can choose where we are headed and how we want to motivate ourselves. We are given an infinite palette of colors. Our gift to you today, this weekend, is to invite you to dig out your color palette – the colors you have available to paint the picture of your life – and spend time with them – open them up, awake, explore what they give you. Experiment with what you hear or see this weekend, dash new colors onto your palette, or just get more familiar with what's already there – what your ideal is, has been – how it serves you, how it may not. The poet Mary Oliver asks us, “What will you do with your one wild and precious life?” This is the ultimate human power. We are infinitely creative, infinitely able to reinvent ourselves. We are, despite at times our deep misgivings, infinitely resourceful and resilient.

The poet David Whyte says in his poem entitled *Journey*, “Sometimes everything has to be inscribed across the heavens so you can find the one line already written inside you. Sometimes it takes a great sky to find that small, bright and indescribable wedge of freedom in your own heart. Sometimes with the bones of the black sticks left when the fire has gone out, someone has written something new in the ashes of your life. You are not leaving. You are arriving.”

WELCOME!

FOURTH DAY

The purpose of the Fourth Day team is twofold: to carry out the duties for the team and candidates – to serve them, and to be the interface between the weekend and the communities outside of the weekend. This team takes care of the set-up and the take-down of the weekend, and many of the “nuts and bolts” to keep things running smoothly.

Welcome to the Candidates — Coed Cursillo #32

Connie Bathke-Mobry – Church of the Redeemer, Zumbrota
Larry Brugger – St. John’s Episcopal, St. Cloud
Mary Brugger – St. John’s Episcopal, St. Cloud
Joe Graca – St. John’s Episcopal, St. Cloud
Matthew Hanna – St. Timothy’s Lutheran Church, Columbia Heights
Iona Holsten – Trinity Lutheran, Stillwater
Lisa Jacoby – Zion Lutheran Church, Lake Crystal
Todd Jacoby – Zion Lutheran Church, Lake Crystal
Marsha Keene – St. Luke’s Episcopal, Hastings
Linda McCarty – St. Peter’s Episcopal, Kasson
Inese Mehr – St. John’s Episcopal, St. Cloud
Jeff Mehr – St. John’s Episcopal, St. Cloud
Phillip Minervino – St. Mary’s Episcopal, Basswood Grove
Barbara L. Noble – St. Christopher’s Episcopal, Roseville
Carrie Pekarek – St. John’s Episcopal, St. Cloud
Joanna Schmolke – Cathedral of St. Mark, Minneapolis
Jim Shoulak – Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Plymouth
Judy Shoulak – Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Plymouth
Zoe Vaughter – St. Martin’s by the Lake, Minnetonka

Focus on the Fourth Day

The Cursillo Method involves much more than just “putting on weekends.”

The Cursillo weekend is not an end in itself. It is a starting point that lasts the rest of your life, a springboard to a long-range practice of the Baptismal Covenant in the life of the Church called the Fourth Day.

The Fourth Day is composed of three major elements:

- † **The Group Reunion**, the heart of Cursillo, is a small group of friends (usually 3–5) who meet (weekly), and who hold each other accountable for their spiritual journey. They report on their piety, their study, and their apostolic action. A bonding develops that institutes a strong support group for life.
- † **The Ultreya**, which is usually held monthly, is a “reunion of the reunions.” It provides support and builds community by allowing the sharing of communal experiences.
- † **Spiritual Direction** is an important element of the Cursillo Movement. It is a commitment to seek out skilled lay persons or clergy for spiritual direction to provide help in deepening their union with Christ.

Rollo #14 – GROUP REUNION (Renewal Groups)

by Georg West III, Episcopal Church of the Nativity, Burnsville (edited for *The Love Letter*)

Our Weekend experience is almost over, but before we go back to the life we left on Thursday, I'd like to reassure you that the Cursillo experience is really not ending today...but rather, it is just beginning!

You may be thinking to yourself, I like what I've found this weekend, but how long will it last? Is there any way I can keep from losing it? Many of us have experienced a retreat or other religious experience in the past, which brought us to a new high for a few days, weeks, or even months, but then the effect wears off, leaving us pretty much where we were before we started.

In all honesty, some people leave the Cursillo weekend feeling content with their personal encounter with Christ, but haven't any commitment to fulfill the commission He left us with: to spread His kingdom. Perhaps racing through your minds this very minute are your busy schedules in all their variety. You may be wondering how you can squeeze in just one more thing, let alone the things I am talking about now. I firmly believe that once you've made this commitment to Christ, all things will fall into place.

Cursillo isn't an end in itself; it will not leave us hanging in mid-air with nothing to support us. Cursillo wasn't meant to be just a happy memory. Cursillo has a plan to sustain us for the rest of our lives, if we wish it to.

Cursillo's great gift, which makes us totally different and unique from any other movement, is the method which it has given us, through our sharing of that three-legged stool: Piety, Study, and Action. It helps us to maintain an ongoing relationship with our Christian sisters and brothers.

In the simplest terms, we meet in small groups in order to grow and progress in our lives as Christians, and we share, review, and plan how to incorporate into our daily lives what is fundamental to being a Christian. And, we depend on the help and guidance of the group as a whole and on the individuals who make up the group to live out our lives as Christians. If properly undertaken, *Renewal Groups* will provide all the essentials needed to build on the foundation that has been laid here this weekend.

A Renewal Group should have somewhere in the neighborhood of 3 to 8 people and should meet regularly. Our spiritual life, just as any other form of life, needs nourishment on a regular basis. If we don't

nourish ourselves regularly, our Christian growth will be hindered. Becoming a part of a group will help us to grow and mature in our faith, and to become the evangelizers Christ has called us to be.

There are three basic steps in sharing our Christian lives. The first is to share our life of *Piety*, by sharing how we have nourished our living union with Christ. Second, we share our life of *Study*, by sharing how we have come to know Christ better and how that knowledge has helped us to develop a more spiritually centered mentality. And finally, we share our life of *Action*, by how we have attempted to live our vocation to evangelize all of our environments.

The purpose of the Renewal Group is to accelerate the conversion of each member. It focuses on our mutual realization of being Church in the world and our ongoing commitment to be evangelizers in our environments.

The Renewal Group is also a practical way of sharing our Christian lives among friends. In doing so we unite ourselves in the love of Christ in order that we may mature gradually in faith, hope, and love. The Renewal Group will also enable us to spiritually form ourselves deeply and to sustain personal relationships springing from our common ideals and values. And the group will help to uplift members and provide for the individual conversion of each member, and to accelerate their ongoing commitment to be evangelizers in their environments.

"If I don't bring Christ into my home and my other environments, who will?"

Give a Renewal Group a chance. Remember that old saying: "Try it; you'll like it." Join a Renewal Group or start one – you'll never be sorry. Remember that it is spiritual suicide to try to persevere in the Christian life alone; the apostles couldn't and neither can we. Just do it! You won't be sorry.

The Renewal Group, when lived, becomes a Christian community with the purpose of affecting the world around us. All that is needed to live the Renewal Group is a desire to be an apostle!

*Keep in mind that we do not have Renewal Groups so that there will be folks to attend Cursillos, but on the contrary, we have Cursillos so that there will be persons to make Renewal Groups! **Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ!***

Convenor's Corner ... Mike Kramer

Cursillo #32, held at St. John the Evangelist in Saint Paul from January 18–22, was an uplifting success. After having postponed the weekend from last June, we were particularly gratified when the weekend plans fell into place. Candidates wholeheartedly participated from the beginning. The team was composed of a large number of newer Fourth Day members who helped create a memorable weekend for the candidates. Our thanks to everyone whose involvement made it such a marvelous experience for all.

Our efforts at the Secretariat continue as we invest our time and energy into the upgrading of procedures and bylaws, positioning us to better meet the challenges that we are confronting in today's society. This year we have several new Secretariat members, bringing to our group new areas of emphasis within our journey. We are attempting to be more active as a Secretariat so as to meet the needs of our movement, and one of our goals is to better communicate what Cursillo is – in a way that potential candidates will feel compelled to attend and participate in future teams. Go online at www.mncursillo.org and explore all the information you'll find there about Cursillo.

Cursillo and the Millennium Development Goals

What are you doing in your church and community to bring Christ into the environment? Are you actively participating in your Fourth Day to continue the challenge from your weekend to bring Christ into your environments?

One way the Episcopal Church helps its members translate their faith into action is by encouraging us to be advocates for the Millennium Development Goals.

In September 2000, all the nations of the world pledged support to the Millennium Development Goals, a mutually agreed-upon structure for them to join together and, in practical ways, address the eight biggest threats to human security in the world today.

The Millennium Development Goals are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental stability, and
8. Promote a global partnership for development.

For more information, see <http://www.millenniumcampaign.org/>

We can carry our faith into our world by supporting these goals. Christ is counting on you!

† † †

THE FIFTH DAY

We celebrate the lives of those who have entered their Fifth Day, life eternal with our Lord.
We give thanks for their lives and ministry among us.

† † †

Don Caldwell, February 2007
Carol Louise Travis, December 2006
Sally Jorgenson, December 2006
Blanche Tepley, December 2006
Susie Hummel, December 2006
Marjorie Humphrey, September 2006
Dr. James Brown, September 2006
John Ryan, June 2006
Forest Davis, April 2006
Glen Bauer, April 2006
David Green, April 2006

† † †

“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

*Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light:
Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.*

*When my way grows drear,
Precious Lord, linger near,
When my life is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call,
Hold my hand lest I fall:
Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.*

*When the darkness appears
And the night draws near,
And the day is past and gone,
At the river I stand,
Guide my feet, hold my hand:
Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.*

† † †

To add a name to the Fifth Day list, send an email to MnCursillo@KMTel.com providing the person's name and date of death.

To give a memorial gift, send a letter providing the name of the person that the memorial is for, and the name of the person providing the memorial, to:

Episcopal Cursillo Community of Minnesota
5224 Minnetonka Boulevard
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

† † †

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

Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage P A I D Permit #46 Hopkins, MN

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MAILINGS: Please use the form below for name and address changes (or go to **www.mncursillo.org** and click the link to the Name/Address Change page). Each returned Newsletter costs us an additional 39¢. The Post Office will not forward Third Class mail. If you are away for an extended time, please contact us with your new address and the dates that address is in effect. If you wish to discontinue receiving this Newsletter, please let us know. We'd like to e-mail more Newsletters to save costs. Please provide your e-mail address on the form below or go to the Name/Address Change page on our website. Thank you. NOTE: E-mail addresses will not be provided to any organization.

Name: _____

Old Address: _____

Old Phone #: _____

New Address: _____

New Phone #: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Present Church Membership: _____

Date new info will be effective: _____

Signature: _____

Comments: _____
