

GO 4th

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The San Jose Filipino

Cursillo Movement Newsletter

Check These Out

Pray with us for the end of the pandemic, the safe re-opening of churches and intercessory intentions at the Call to Pray the Rosary online every Monday at 7:30pm via Webex meeting.

Register to the virtual 30th National Cursillo Encounter on July 24 to 25, 2020. Join the livestream masses, virtual fellowship, and breakout sessions. Visit the National Cursillo website for more info: www.natl-cursillo.org

We are counting on you. Join us at the monthly Ultreya and School Leaders. Watch out for invitations or visit our website for more details about SJ Filipino Cursillo events: www.dsifcm.org

Support the National Cursillo Movements. Pledge donation to the \$3/Yr campaign or register at Amazon Smile to enable them to donate a portion of your purchases in Amazon. Visit the National website for more details. www.natl-cursillo.org

In this Corner

Many firsts in the second

Our second edition features a lot of firsts. Fr. Francis, our Spiritual Director, meditates about coming out of the stay-at-home order for the first time in many weeks. An interview with the SJFCM Cursillo's first Lay Director and first Rectora. A visit to the site of the first numbered Cursillo Weekend in Mallorca, Spain.

National Cursillo English Coordinator Bro. Cef Aquilon explains some Cursillo terms, as we debut our new Q&A section, Ask and you shall Receive an Answer. We remember the 2000 World Cursillo Ultreya at the Vatican, in the Vocation in my Vacation. And we are proud of Kaitlin Sacman-Briones, our TV teen hero who makes masks.

We are in a unique situation with a "new normal" in a new reality. This is the first time ever we had to gather for School of Leaders, Ultreyas and Secretariat meetings virtually. And first time for us to gather online on Call to Pray the Rosary as a Cursillo family.

Perhaps anxiety over the "new normal" linger for some of us: How do we spread the good news with friendship if we can't even shake hands anymore? Will we ever do the abrazo again? When can we share potluck? It might seem facetious but there was news from Manila that the chief of the national police was criticized because his friends gave him a Mananita on his birthday. As we navigate this new normal, we are challenged to share Christ in "the best news of the best reality." May we, as St. Paul said: keep the faith. Compete well and finish the race. Ultreya!

— Sis. Robin Barkin

Visit to the first Cursillo weekend site, first numbered weekend site

In 2007, a visit to the birthplace of the Cursillo Movement and possibly meet the founder were in my wish list. Never say never -- because it happened 10 years later when I was blessed to join the pilgrimage to Fatima, Portugal for the fifth World Ultreya on May 4-7, 2017. It coincided with the centennial of Our Lady of Fatima, Eduardo Bonnin's 100th birthday anniversary and the debut presentation of his biographical book.

My Cursillo journey started from the US to Madrid, then a connection to Palma de Mallorca. It was a Monday in Palma de Mallorca and I was so excited to have made it after two days of travelling. First stop was Cala Figuera, where we visited the first venue of the first Cursillo weekend held August 19-22, 1944 in a small chalet by the cove, then a small fishing village. That same evening, we attended their Monday evening Ultreya – I was at the site where Eduardo Bonnin and his friends gathered in prayer and friendship.

We then went to the office of Fundacion de Eduardo Bonnin Aguilo (FEBA). There on display was the popular photo of Jesus on the wall, a picture of Eduardo Bonnin on a bookshelf, his collection of books, his index cards, his notes, his origami birds, everything about him. It is Eduardo's place! I was in awe realizing I was in the same room where Eduardo spent all his life reading, studying, writing down his thoughts, the methods, the Structure of Ideas, everything about Cursillo.

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Inside the office of Fundacion de Eduardo Bonnin Aguilo (FEBA)

Visit to the first Cursillo... continued

Next stop was a visit to the atrium of the Capuchin Church where Eduardo Bonnin is entombed.

This is the translation of the plaque:

"His deep faith in a Christ who is a friend, normal and close, led him to dedicate his life to spreading the Charism of the Cursillos of Christianity throughout the world, preferably among those who are far away, making it possible for each person who lives a Cursillo to have an encounter with himself, with God and with others, and then to share in his environment the best news of the best reality.

"That God in Christ loves us, communicated by the best means, which is friendship, towards the best of each one, which is his being a person."

I would have loved to have met Eduardo Bonnin in person but it was not meant to be. I am content to be a beneficiary of his legacy: the Cursillo mentality, methodology and, consequently, my ministry. A pathway to knowing God more, serve Him more and love Him more.

We also visited the Shrine in Sant Honorato, high up on Mount Randa.

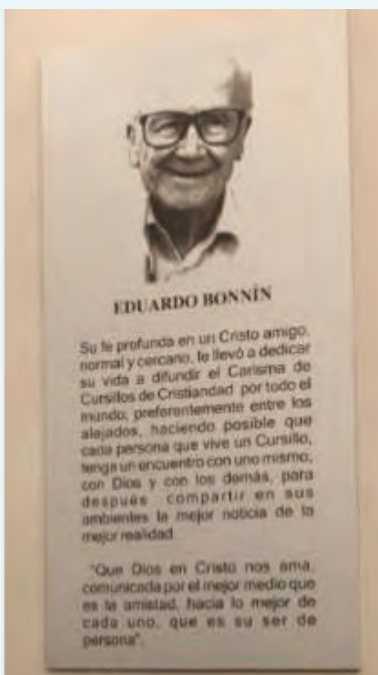
Here the first numbered Cursillo occurred in January 7-10, 1949. (Bonnin and his friends realized there were too many weekends occurring and there had to be a way to keep track of the number of Cursillos.

And so, the Cursillo weekends were numbered since then. We attended Mass in the chapel, gathered in the rollo room, enjoyed the beautiful gardens, overlooking such a breath-taking view of Mallorca.

– **Sis. Linda Buhay**



Bonnin's head stone proclaiming him as an "apprentice Christian"



Plaque at Capuchin Church where Bonnin is entombed.



Plaque of Sant Honorat (left) and rollo room where Bonnin and Cursillo pioneers held first numbered weekend (right)

Fr. Francis writes '40'

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Cursillo Movement,

At this time of pandemic, I pray that you are all healthy and safe. A few weeks ago, Bro. Harvey gave me an interesting challenge: Father, for our next issue, why not write an analogy between the shelter-in-place order and some of the events that transpired in the Holy Bible?

This suggestion had me thinking. Coincidentally, a priest friend of mine shared with me a message that resonated the questions I had in mind. It says, "the official lockdown of COVID-19 started March 23 and was slated to end May 1*. That is EXACTLY 40 days. The Latin root of the word "quarantine" is "40." So, what does the Bible say about 40?"

In the Bible, the flood lasted 40 days. It took 40 years for Moses to flee from Egypt. Forty days, Moses stayed on Mount Sinai to receive the Commandments. Exodus lasted 40 years. Jesus fasted for 40 days. Forty days for a woman to rest after giving birth, and the optimum number of weeks for human gestation is 40. A group of theologians thinks the number 40 represents "change." It is the time of preparing a person, or people to make a fundamental change. In the Filipino Catholic Culture, we traditionally offer Mass on the 40th day after a death of a loved one in reference to Christ's Ascension after 40 days of His death.

Definitely, it has been more than 40 days. But I invite you to believe and pray. Remember whenever the number 40 appears in the Bible, there is a "change."

The shepherd of our diocese, Bishop Oscar Cantu, expressed in his recent statement that his office, in collaboration with fellow bishops of the region and health experts are in conversation with the office of the governor in Sacramento. Planning is now happening at multiple levels as we wait for the government's advice to re-open. Our bishops are envisioning a phased approach: limiting attendance, observing social distancing in seating, wearing masks, cleaning pews after each Mass, carefully distributing Holy Communion so as not to touch the communicant, etc. There is hope!

I am sure this is your observation, too. During this "quarantine," rivers are cleaning up, vegetation is growing, the air is becoming cleaner because of less pollution; there is less theft and murder, healing is happening and, most importantly, people are turning to Christ.

The earth is at rest for the first time in many years and hearts are truly transforming.

The article sent to me ends with these words: "Remember we are in the year 2020, and $20 + 20 = 40$. Also, 2020 is the year of the United States Census. Jesus Christ, the savior of the world, was born during a census. 2020 means perfect vision."

Brothers and sisters, may our sight focus on the Lord and living according to his perfect vision for us knowing He holds us in the palm of His hand. As we continue to shelter-in-place, let us continue to pray for healing and peace. In this month of Mary, let us ask our Blessed Mother to whom we are consecrated to be with us and pray with us. De Colores!

– **Fr. Francis Kalaw, Spiritual Director**

*Fr. Francis took on this challenge before California Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the stay-at-home-order extended to May 31. As of this writing churches have been given the greenlight to open gradually at minimum capacity.

TV teen hero who makes masks for charity

For as long as I can remember, my niece Kaitlin likes to use her talents and creativity to give back to the community. When she was in elementary, with a few of classmates they made Christmas cards to sell. All of the proceeds went to purchase gift cards for the school's community outreach program. She also put together a bake sale to raise funds to find a cure for Kennedy's Disease which her father struggles with.

Last year, Kaitlin learned how to sew at summer camp. She enjoyed making scrunchies (hair ties) and drawstring backpacks so much that she started her own little business. She uses a variety of fabrics, from Hawaiian to sports-themed and sell them at different events throughout the Bay area, always donating a portion, if not all, of her sales.

Kaitlin, a 14-year old from Santa Clara, is an avid dancer and lacrosse player. But the Covid-19 pandemic put a stop to all of these with the shelter-in-place order. When she heard about the mask shortage, she pivoted her scrunchies business and started making masks for front-line workers. Her masks are unique in that she created a pocket to place a filter for additional protection. When she's not distance learning, she spends her spare time making masks. She has been recognized by KRON-4 TV heroes, KGO 810 and the San Jose Sharks for her efforts.

Kaitlin's paternal grandparents, Bro. Ramon and Sis. Dory Briones are Cursillistas from Oakland Diocese and maternal grandparents Bro. Art and Sis. Mercy Sacman and aunt Sis. Jeannette Sacman-Reymundo are Cursillistas from San Jose Diocese. We are all proud of her and her accomplishments. To order masks or have one donated to a frontline worker contact scrunchiesbykaitlin.com.



(U/D:) Kaitlin, Sis. Jeannette and Joe

Interview: SJFC first Rectora & first Lay Director

Q: Why did you want to be a Cursillista? Who brought you into the Weekend — a relative or friend and how?

A: (Sis. Aster) Bro. Sam took his Cursillo weekend first of May in 1976. Bro. Sam sponsored me to the following weekend after his on June 1976. After he came out of the weekend, the first thing he told me was, "You will be going to the Cursillo weekend in June!" I was so impressed with the change in him. He introduced our family to praying before and after meals and the Rosary every night. And when he disciplined the children, he talked to them in a caring manner rather than being authoritative. Because of these, I was eager to go to the women's weekend.

(Bro. Sam) I was sponsored by a friend I worked with in Manila at the Commission on Elections. During the late 1960's, Cursillo became very trendy, especially when movie personalities, government employees, politicians and other high-profile recruits made it into a status symbol. Sis. Naty Abad (RIP) joined the Cursillo then. Initially, I was among the few that did not join despite her persistence. God must have wanted me to become a Cursillista because I met her again in the US in 1976. During that time, the San Francisco Filipino Cursillo was very active and it didn't take long for her to recruit me.

Q: Compare St. Joseph to Camp St. Francis and Vallambrosa. What did you like most from each and why? With Step by step, which do you think is an apt venue for the Weekend and why?

A: (Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster) St Joseph was an old building in Los Altos, where we had our first and some of our Cursillo weekends until it was condemned (due to the October 17, 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and was closed on June 30, 1991.) Some of us met Msgr. Willie Manrique there as a Seminarian. Camp St. Francis in Aptos is ideal for a Cursillo weekend because of its structure and privacy although it's not the most comfortable of venues. Vallambrosa, on the other hand, has most of the comforts of a hotel. Sis. Aster, personally liked Camp St. Francis. It felt like it was made for Cursillistas to offer the remoteness, inconveniences and challenges as Palancas for the candidates. The place is also conducive to mentally taking a step back for no-distraction prayers and meditations.

Q: How was the first Filipino Secretariat chosen or discerned? How did the San Jose group separate from the San Francisco group?

A: (Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster) When San Jose became a Diocese in 1982, we were still going to San Francisco for every Cursillo activities and we brought our children and grandchildren along on the weekends when we joined the breakfast mananita as our main Apostolate. With the encouragement of the San Francisco Filipino Secretariat, Advisor Sis. Sophie Rualo (RIP) and Deacons Bro. Mar Tano and Bro. Bart Pullon (RIP), we were advised to put up a Filipino Cursillo Movement in the new Diocese of San Jose (that Pope John Paul II established on January 27, 1981) and they would be willing to help us. We were advised to meet with Bro. Carl Bunje (RIP), who became the first spiritual director for the Filipino Cursillo.

At that time, the Anglo Cursillo had Fr. John Coleman as spiritual director. Also, at that time, a group of Cursillistas from Oakland, Vallejo and the Philippines, headed by Bro. John Mendoza (RIP), meeting at Most Holy Trinity parish (San Jose), invited us. Together with members from this group we introduced ourselves to Deacon Carl Bunje and began preparing to set up a Filipino Secretariat in San Jose.

With the help of San Francisco Diocese and Carol Slife (RIP), regional coordinator from the Diocese of Monterey, we had a 3-day Cursillo Leaders Workshop at the St. Patrick Seminary. After the workshop, a 1-day retreat led by Fr. John Coleman as spiritual director and Bro. Carl Bunje as associate spiritual director was scheduled at the Carmelite Monastery with the purpose of selecting members of the Secretariat. The members of the first

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Interview... continued

Filipino Secretariat were chosen from the attendees of both workshop and retreat. The first Secretariat members were chosen in an election at the residence of Bro. Mel (RIP) and Sis. Connie Valderrama (RIP). The results were submitted to Bro. Carl Bunje for discernment and confirmation by virtue of him being the representative of the Bishop. After the formation of the new Secretariat, Ultreyas mostly at Most Holy Trinity were established and joined the Anglos in their School of Leaders. During this time, the Filipino Cursillo was operating under the English-speaking Cursillo. We also had Inter-cultural Secretariat meetings mostly in Star of the Sea parish (Alviso) where Fr. Coleman was pastor.

In April 1992, due to his heart condition and a heart attack the previous year, Bro. Carl Bunje resigned as the spiritual advisor for the Filipino Cursillo. In his resignation letter to the Vicar for Clergy Fr. Mike Mitchell, Sis. Aster as lay director requested the appointment of Fr. Ben Manding who was helping in various capacities since the inception of the Filipino Cursillo in the Diocese.

That same year, new Articles of Operation for Region XI were implemented "to make each Ethnic Group in the Diocese separate in terms of organizational structure, however maintaining unity in spirit and purpose." Each Secretariat: Anglo, Hispanic, Vietnamese, Chinese and Filipino had its own spiritual advisor.

Q: Wasn't there a time when rollistas didn't have templates for individual rollos and how did the team know it was on target without official outlines?

A: (Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster) The Cursillo did use a smaller perfect-bound Manual for the weekend with a compilation of rollos but was not as articulated as the wire-bound Cursillo Manual that began appearing in 1999. The new ones, for instance had more detailed guidelines for duration of delivery, background, atmosphere, etc. Also, at that time, it was intended only for the spiritual director, rector and rollistas.

Q: In the early days of the Movement, the methodology required targeted recruitment. Meaning influencers like lawyers, teachers, doctors. Was this recruitment goal followed and successful? From hindsight, do you think we should have followed this strategy or the one we have now allowing everyone in and why?

A: (Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster) Yes, it was there in the beginning. The targeting of selected environment was very helpful in facilitating evangelization. The Pre-cursillo committee assigned target environments to be influenced by the Cursillo. Like the media, school, health, police, or other sectors of the society. Yes, they were successful and were able to bring others into the Cursillo. At that time was there was not too many organizations and movements in the area to compete with the Cursillo. I do not think we can apply this strategy today. That is, to target specific sector/environment, because there are so many organizations now. The context of the mentality now is also different from the past and current circumstances must be taken into consideration.



Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster Pasion

Q: During those times, what was the average number of candidates for women? Men? What do you think changed? Was it because there were not much Filipinos in the Bay Area?

A: (Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster) During those times, we were averaging 20-24 candidates. But there has been an increase in the number of religious groups and organizations that also welcome the faithful. Also, since our inception in 1982, we have graduated a lot of Cursillistas so we have already saturated the environment plus there are the annual challenges of choosing a cost-effective venue and raising funds to afford it.

Q: Did the Movement then have a larger number of returning graduates who made Cursillo their primary apostolate? Why or why not? What other organizations or apostolate did some Cursillo graduates go to instead of the Cursillo?

A: (Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster) Yes, you can see that most of the graduates from that time and from other weekends have become rectors, rectoras, members of the Secretariat and even service team members at the Regional level. Some San Jose Cursillistas started Couples for Christ and got involved in related community work. You will find Cursillistas among the ranks of the Knights of Columbus and the Legion of Mary. But they started as Cursillistas and they will always be Cursillistas though they went back to their environments and chose to do their evangelization there. Then they bloomed where they were planted. Cursillistas were chosen to be leaders wherever they are in the community.

Q: Which was the oldest Filipino diocesan movement in NorCal? The acknowledged leader?

A: (Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster) More than likely, the San Francisco Filipino Cursillo. There were a lot of acknowledged leaders at that time but the first Filipino to wield influence and become a member of the National Cursillo is Sis. Sophie Rualo. There were many leaders like Sis. Carol Bautista, Sis. Norma Gamboa, Sis. Rose Ayalde, Sis. Belen Moreno, Sis. Bea Delgadillo, Sis. Amy Tano, Deacon Mar Tano, Deacon Bart Pullon, Bro. Nestor Uy, Bro. Nemsy Gubatan and Bro. Doming Cabrera.

Q: Compare Cursillistas in your time with Cursillistas today. What do you think are the differences?

A: (Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster) It's hard to compare because they are from different times, different environments and there were different leaderships at the National. From the beginning of our diocesan movement, we have all tried to interpret and spread the ideas of our founder, Eduardo Bonnin (RIP). But Bonnin's thoughts have been given new life when leaders from the National spent time to really understand and study the founder of the Cursillo and translate his words for today's environment, resulting in Step by step.

Q: Knowing what you know now, what would you do differently if you were given a chance and why?

A: (Bro. Sam and Sis. Aster) We will not change anything. Since we have already saturated and populated our environment, we suggest two years before we conduct weekends. The first year to prepare and allow friendship to grow with candidates and the next for the formation of staff and sponsors. This to comply with Step by Step.
— Sis. Maria De Quinto

In memory of Bro. Frank Rom

“Several generations of Cursillistas remember a time when Bro. Frank was permanent dorm officer. He was bespectacled, old and short but had more energy than any younger Cursillista. You woke up in the Weekends when he rang the bell and had coffee brewing if the bell didn’t do the job. Perhaps, the fondest memory most everyone cherishes is his Hawaiian number replete with grass skirt and lei in the cold September evening. It really rang my bell! That was Bro. Frank – he was always willing to do anything for the Movement and the church. He would do 24/7 vigil in perpetual adoration that put most of my old Group reunion members to shame. He started vigils on first Fridays and not return home after Monday dawn vigil. He only stopped when his eyes began to fail him and he couldn’t drive any more. He was also full of surprises. He was a member of the Men of the Sacred Heart and the St. Joseph’s Workers (he refused the title ‘president’ because he said in a radio interview, ‘we all kneel to pray and there’s no president.’ But he once told me he would always be a Cursillista because of what he witnessed in his Weekend long ago. He said the image of a priest strumming a guitar singing to him outside in the heavy rain at the Mananita was burned into his retina. Bro. Frank may not have dazzling stories to share in his rollo but he walked the talk.” – **Bro. Harvey Barkin**

“I feel sad that I lost my long-time praying partner. But it’s a consolation to have known Bro. Frank. I prayed with him not only at Our Lady of Peace Parish but also in people’s homes when we enthroned the Sacred Heart together with Bro. Laddy (Matudio), Bro. Cris (Sacman) and Bro. Dom (Gavino). He was my praying partner since the 1970s and also in a lot of all-night vigils. There’s no question that he’s now with the Lord. Bro. Frank must have spent the longest hours than anybody else with the Blessed Sacrament at Our Lady of Peace and also during Cursillo weekends when he would go on 24-hour vigils because the rest of the team was busy. He was a living prayer bank that everybody looked up to. I know that he will pray more for us than we for him.”

– **Bro. Art Sacman**



Bro. Frank with Bro. Art at Kaiser Santa Teresa



Bro. Frank in his younger days serving the Cursillo



In memory of Sis. Connie Valderrama



“I’ve visited many sick people over the years but Sis. Connie was one of the most remarkable that I knew. You’d never know if she is ill because she was optimistic, always smiling, had a great sense of humor, welcoming and eager to see our barkada. She has great recall and we were always reminiscing about the great times we’ve had together, such as shopping, eating out and having quality time. She will be surely be missed.” – **Sis. Celia Caampued**

Not too many people know that Sis. Connie and late hubby Bro. Mel first met as pen-pals. Sis. Connie was an English teacher before she came to California. Her most famous pupil – former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. It must be a testimony to her that she taught all her children to read by age four. In the 60s, she taught Peace Corps volunteers Cebuano at San Jose State College. She made a name for herself as an agent (of change) when she perfected the sounding and stabbing technique. She was not necessarily violent but she was reputed to have Oddjob’s precision in throwing house slippers (instead of a steel-rimmed bowler hat) if you stepped out of line like a despicable villain from a James Bond film. To some Cursillistas, she can be like Miss Money Penny, chastising even somebody like 007 to be on his best behavior.

– **Bro. Harvey Barkin**

Vocation in my Vacation

“We went to the 2000 Ultreya, held at St. Peter Square in the Vatican. We visited the Basilica di San Francesco and saw St. Francis’s tomb underneath. It was discovered in 1818 after a 52-day dig. Then it was painstakingly restored in 2011. The stone sarcophagus containing St. Francis of Assisi’s remains are in the Basilica Inferiore.”

“Pope John Paul II celebrated the Mass for the World Ultreya. This was before he became a saint. We also passed through the four Holy Doors in the Basilicas of St. Peter, St. John Laterna, St. Mary Major and St. Paul. At that time, it was said that the Holy Doors were opened every decade and, under certain conditions, plenary indulgences would be granted to devotees who walked through the doors. Later, designated parishes also had holy doors all over the world for the faithful who could not make it to Rome.”

– Bro. Andy Ramones



St. Francis of Assisi’s remains contained in the Basilica Inferiore



(L-R:) Bro. Vince and Sis. Elsa Songcayawon, Sis. Flor and Bro. Andy Ramones, Sis. Mercy Sacman and Sis. Elsa Tarlit.

Share stories and photos of churches and holy places you’ve visited in your vacations by sending them to any member of the Communications Team

Ask and you shall receive an answer

Often, buzz words suddenly appear in Cursillo communications and we use them without fully understanding what they mean. Please explain: “square meter” and “far-away.”

From Bro. Cef Aguillon Jr., National English Coordinator:

Several references to the term “moveable square meter” can be found in the Study of the Charism book.

Here is one ...

“Cursillo, as a lay ecclesial Movement is realized in the person who lives their Baptism, announcing the Good News of the Gospel, the love of God, through personal testimony in the places they move about in their square meter in which they find themselves living: home, work, places of entertainment. But always in intimate union with priests.”

I believe square meter translates to environment. It is the space (square meter, environment) that you occupy at this exact moment. Your square meter moves with you wherever you go. Your square meter is where God places you so that you can evangelize there.

From Study of the Charism, pages 85 -86:

“The Far Away are those who do not have faith or do not know if they have it, because they live caught up in things they believe are important, but that do not satisfy them.”

“Far Away are those people who do not know that God loves them.”

“Far Away are those who are not informed or are misinformed, or uninformed.”

“And they are far away, because nobody told them of God or because they did not want to listen. Or maybe because what reached them was not in the language and style appropriate for them. As a result, these men and women, simply have no faith or who do not know if they have faith or do not want to have faith.”

Questions about the Cursillo? Send it to anyone in the Communications Team.

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San Jose Filipino Cursillo Movement

