

# GO 4<sup>th</sup>

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The San Jose Filipino

Cursillo Movement Newsletter

*Message from the Spiritual Adviser*

## **To bear fruit despite aridity**

The famous “Murphy’s law” says, “If things can go wrong, they will.” I am sure that you have learned about this in the past. Named after Edward Murphy (1918-1990), an American engineer working on a project at Edwards Air Force Base, found a technical error made by one of the junior technicians and said, “If there’s any way to do it wrong, he will find it.”

What’s fascinating about this law are the variations that came after it, for instance: “You never find a lost article until you replace it.” Another one is a humorous take on how many projects overshoot the deadline: “The first 90 percent of a project takes 90 percent of the time; the last 10 percent takes the other 90 percent of the time.” But my personal favorite is: “If you drop a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, it will always fall off the jelly side.”

We could go on and on with many variations of this theme. I remember one time when I was called to see a dying patient at St. Louis Hospital in Gilroy. I left in a hurry but ended up getting all red traffic lights along East Dunne Ave. until Hwy 101 exit. But on my way back home, all lights were green. What a coincidence! Indeed, if anything can go wrong, it will.

These past few Sundays, we were treated with Jesus’ parables. And one of them is the famous parable of the farmer sowing seeds. It tells us that some of the seeds fell on a footpath, some fell on rocky ground, some on thorny ground, and a small portion on good ground that produced a yield of 100 or 60 or 30 fold.

Perhaps, if we take into consideration the kind of soil in the Holy Land, we will find that it is generally arid and I’m sure it’s very frustrating to the farmers. A farmer there might conclude: “If there is any hard or thorny ground to be found, that’s where the seed will fall.”

Jesus in the Gospel seems to agree. But then what happens? Some of the seeds, no matter how small, will end up on good ground where the thorns won’t get it and the birds won’t get it and the drought won’t get it.

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**In this Corner**

## **Making History at the National Encounter**

*Let’s make History together.* This was the banner of the first virtual National Cursillo Encounter last July 24 to 25. And indeed, history was made. Not because it got 763 registrations. Or that we had three bishops, 20 priests and 19 deacons, two from international groups. Or that Region 11 registered 187 Cursillistas – the most number of attendees- of which the Filipino language group had 87 attendees, the biggest delegation. We had to be divided into four breakout sessions for group discussions (10 of us from San Jose were in separate sessions). Or that all the Filipino dioceses’ spiritual advisers and deacons joined the National Encounter. Or the moving Sabatina which honored Our Mother Mary in different cultural traditions. Or the talks given by inspiring speakers: Personal Encounter with Christ by Fr. Mark Seiker, Friendship with Self, Christ and Others by Nadia Lopez, The Regional Coordinator and Services Team Responsibilities by Cef Aguillon Jr. and The Christian Leader in the Cursillo Movement by Juan Ruiz.

Together all these helped. But we made history because for the first time, the Cursillo spirit of friendship was put together with technology. And charity, patience and perseverance shined through virtual reality.

Evangelization in the Cursillo has always been a face to face encounter. Being a friend, making a friend and bringing our friend to Christ depends a lot on our personal contact, our tangible presence for one another. We strengthen our PSA and affirm our friendships through small, daily actions of care and affection: meeting up with our Group Reunions, sharing meals, and giving each other hugs. Not easy to translate these actions in a virtual meeting like the National Encounter.

And the transition was not seamless. We had technical difficulties. We lost connection to one speaker in the middle of his talk. Some brothers and sisters were locked-out from the breakout sessions. We kept our volunteer tech support team busy assisting, training and bridging tech generation gaps for those new to virtual meetings. When tech support asked us to raise our hands (click the raise my hand icon in the Zoom page) as they called out our region and language group, some brothers and sisters physically raised their hands in the room.

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## Message from...

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This seed will take root and bear fruit and you will end up with far more than you had before.

The point of the parable was not to deny Murphy's Law but to offer us hope and encouragement. Despite the frustrations, the farmers' work pays off. Disaster is not permanent, it is only temporary.

One conclusion then, is that despite difficulties that Jesus experienced, including the crucifixion, his work will still bear fruit.

As we continue to face this pandemic, no matter how many frustrations about the increasing number of cases and other difficulties we experience, we, too, will overcome and will bear fruit.

This parable has a very practical side. As we journey through life, we need to expect failures and frustrations because they will happen. But we can never let our defeats defeat us. Even though three fourths of what we do may not work out, we need to look at the one fourth that does work out. It is easy to quit, to give up, to stop trying. But Jesus is telling us that is not the way to live.

Later on, in Edward Murphy's engineering work, when reporters asked him how his team avoided accidents, he said they adhered to Murphy's Law, which helped them steer away from commonly made mistakes. We, too, can use our challenges to our advantage.

Let us let the parable teach us to be confident, to be courageous, to begin again after defeat. It doesn't matter if the peanut butter and jelly sandwich falls jelly side down. We can always bend down, pick it up and make another one. Things may go wrong but we can start over. Above all, let's look at the things that go right, look at our fruit, our successes, our victories, the people whose lives we touch. In our small ways, we can bear fruit 100 or 60 or 30 times over. De Colores!

– **Fr. Francis Kalaw**



## Making History...

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A number needed help changing their attendee names from iPad or my iPhone to be properly identified. A few of us needed help to locate chat or unmute ourselves. And the tech team gave great witness to patience, empathy and grace as they helped this large group cut through tech to come together in Christ.

Humor and encouragement were never in short supply. Jokes were shared, delays and inconvenience were offered as palanca. We were even treated to an inspiring music video. A few led us in songs at the masses, celebrated by Bishop Eduardo Nevares, our National Cursillo Episcopal Adviser, who reminded us to treasure the gift of friendship with God and each other and the gift of Cursillo.

And we ended with a fond *vaya con Dios* to some 600+ brothers and sisters, finding another bond of connecting with each other in virtual reality.

It reminded me of my first Cursillo Weekend. We encountered self, God and others as we lived the Weekend in friendship. And no matter how things get messed up, God always made it right. As in all Cursillo Weekends, God is there at the center in a circle of friendship. It was like this at the National Encounter – friendship was not just a word. We lived it. I believe God allowed us to walk the talk in this Encounter even when technology fumbled at first. One small click from each of us, one big connection for us all. The Holy Spirit has landed. This is how we made history together. *Ultreya!*

– **Sis. Robin Barkin**

## News Bits: Announcements & Schedules

- *Watch out for a drive-in Fourth Day Cursillo Community mass celebration on September 19. Details to follow in our announcements in the next weeks.*
- *Save the date for meeting invitations to the online Ultreya every first week of the month. Visit our website for more details and San Jose Filipino Cursillo events: [www.dsjfc.org](http://www.dsjfc.org)*
- *Join us at the School Leaders on August 21. Accept the virtual meeting invitation we'll be sending you in the next few weeks.*
- *Pray with our San Jose Cursillo family. Join us at the Call to Pray the Rosary every Monday at 7:30pm via WebEx meeting. Just accept the meeting reminders from our hardworking Cursillo Secretary, Sis. Emma.*
- *Support the National Cursillo Movements. Pledge donation to the \$3/Yr. campaign and/or register at Amazon Smile to donate a percentage of your purchases in Amazon. Visit the National Cursillo website for more details. [www.natl-cursillo.org](http://www.natl-cursillo.org)*

Interview: Cursillo Sweethearts - Sis. Mappy & Bro. Marlon de Leon

## They said 'yes' to the Lord, then to each other - Part I

### **Q: How did you meet in the Cursillo? Did you seek him/her out yourself or did somebody turn you on to him/her?**

A: Bro Marlon (Cursillo #187) was sponsored by Bro. Dondi Veloso and Sis. Mappy (Cursillo #188), by Sis. Dina Forlanda. They both took their Cursillo in 1998, at Camp St. Francis in Aptos.

Sis. Mappy: "Before the Cursillo weekend I went to Most Holy Trinity (MHT) for Sunday Mass and I saw this tall soloist, playing the guitar in white long sleeve polo. After communion one Sunday, I prayed, Lord if he is single, can he please be the man for me, then I prayed the Our Father. I was very specific because that is what our Lord wants."

"After the women's weekend there was a party after the clausura at MHT but lo and behold, we met for the first time. I was so surprised to see Bro. Marlon. This is the guy I prayed for."

Sis. Mappy was the youngest of the graduates and the only single lady. This party was followed by the formation of the YAC (Young Adults for Christ), headed by Bro. Vic Reyes. They became members of the group which met every week and they did the block rosary and brought the Our Lady of Fatima image to different homes. They also became involved in Cursillo activities like the Christmas party and summer dance.

Of course, there were teasing and the Cursillo community would somehow engineer accidents to get them together.

Engineers like: Sis. Fe Rodriguez, Bro. Manny and Sis. Virgie Estrada, Sis. Lumen and Bro. Andy Savella and almost all of the elders including the late Sis. Yolly Veloso and Sis. Leonie Reyes. There was even ribbing for each Cursillista to cough up \$50 so they can get married.

### **Q: What is the specific quality that you like about him/her and why?**

A: Sis Mappy: "His looks, he is tall, fair and handsome, his very gentlemanly manners like opening doors, getting plates and food."

Bro Marlon: "She is very pretty, sexy, (her) clean look, nice looking, elegant, sometimes she is intimidating because she is so prim and proper, always made up, a good dancer, (she) can sing and play the guitar with the same interests and talents as mine."

### **Q: How long did you date before you got married?**

A: They were a couple for seven months after meeting. A year after they first met, they got married.

### **Q: When were sure you were going to marry this Cursillista?**

A: Sis. Mappy: "The very first time I saw him, I knew he is the man for me and (he is) the man I asked (for) from our Lord the Sunday I prayed for him."

Bro. Marlon: "A few months after dating, I knew she was the one."

### **Q: Was it important that he or she is a Cursillista? Why or why not?**

A: Sis. Mappy and Bro. Marlon: "Yes, because we have the same interest and activities through the Cursillo which lead to happiness."

### **Q: After you married, did you both get into the same group reunion and was there a difference when you were grouping when you were single?**

A: When single:

Bro. Marlon: "My group reunion members were Bro. Dondi Veloso,

Bro. Jonnex Montecillo and Bro. Mario de Leon."

Sis. Mappy: "My group reunion members were Bro. Titus and Sis. Pat Raceles, Sis. Nina Palugod, Sis. Winnie Santua and Sis. Baby Micua."

After marriage: "Our group reunion members are Sis. Winnie, Bro. Titus and Sis. Pat, Sis. Nina and when Sis. Winnie got married, Bro. Ramon Santua came aboard and later, Bro. Chito and Sis. Maria de Quinto."

### **Q: Does being married make it easier if you were both officers in the Secretariat? Why or why not?**

A: Bro. Marlon: "No, because it might affect my decision in voting. It is easier if both are in the meeting but only one is an officer."

Sis. Mappy: "No, because there may be conflict of interest. It will jeopardize the voting and for ethical reasons."

### **Q: Do you evangelize together as a couple or do you find you must evangelize on your own and why? When you do it as a couple, do you think evangelizing is more effective and why?**

A: Bro. Marlon and Sis. Mappy: "We both evangelize individually as far as friends, co-workers are involved. We evangelize as a couple when we evangelize common friends and family."

### **Q: Do you think you have less spats because you are Cursillistas? Why or why not?**

A: Sis Mappy: "Yes, in our 21 years of marriage, we never have any fights at all, we practice the faith and model it on our relationship. Like Elsa said in the movie Frozen 'Let it go, let it go, let it go'."

Bro. Marlon: "Echoing what Sis. Mappy said, if we have some spats, they are very minor, I do not like conflicts and treat things as no big deal. As the cursillo teaches us, be a friend."

And both say, with the Cursillo activities they forget the minor conflicts, if any, because of the joy they experience.

### **Q: Are you pressured into decisions or situations by your Cursillista friends or do you get a**

**lot of teasing and what do you do about it? Or do you feel that sometimes you lose your privacy because of what your Cursillo friends know about you (from group reunions) and how do you deal with it?**

A: Bro. Marlon: "No, actually it is good to hear from them because sometimes you think your problems are big but others (have) bigger problems."

Sis. Mappy: "No, it does not affect my decision one way or the other, the choice is mine."

### **Q: Would you advocate for a Cursillo Weekend for coed or married couples? Why or why not and what would be the difference?**

A: Bro. Marlon: "No, it has to be experienced by yourself, to express myself, to be open in what I have to say."

Sis. Mappy: "No, it will violate the unique charism for the individual. No contact."

### **Q: What do you think makes Cursillista unions such as yours a "match made in heaven" or not? Explain.**

A: Bro. Marlon: "Every marriage is a match made in heaven. You do not have to be a Cursillista. (Every marriage has) the same goals, beliefs, faith and Christian faith. With the Cursillo you have the support of the whole community, the uniqueness of having friends and family in the Movement."

Sis. Mappy: "I have always believed that this marriage is a match (made) in heaven. I asked our Lord and He gave Bro. Marlon to me."

– Sis. Maria de Quinto



## In memory of Bro. Dondi Veloso

As many of you know, Bro. Dondi Veloso is one of the Cursillistas who loved the Movement and loved serving the Lord every possible way. He was not shy about sharing the joy of being a Cursillista and more so, living in the friendship of Christ. Bro Dondi's a man filled with conviction that God is alive and trustworthy, and there is joy in having a personal relationship with God. He shared that joy among his friends and his co-music ministers. As a result, it was easy for him to invite others to join the Movement. Sis. Marita, Bro. Mario, and I were one of the many that he sponsored and invited to the Movement. We will be forever grateful for him introducing us to a Christian community where we have met a lot of great friends and where we continue to find opportunities to live a Christian life. Bro. Dondi was not just a sponsor but a great friend, especially during our early years with the community. He would offer to give us a ride whenever we needed to go places and was visible and present in most family and community gatherings at church and in our homes. He was family to us, and even my kids called him Tito Dondi. He was very generous of his time, talent, and treasures. He was one of the music ministers who you'd love to sing alongside and a brother you'd want to be by your side when serving in the Cursillo weekends. I have seen how he cared for his family and his mom, our late friend Sis. Yolly. Bro. Dondi would always invite us to their family gatherings and through those gatherings, we saw how much he loved his family and how proud he was of them. He would often kid around with his nephews and nieces and would always introduce them to us. With Bro. Dondi's jokes and funny antics, there was never a dull moment when he was around. He will be greatly missed but it is heaven's gain that he is returning home. So long Bro. Dondi and I pray that God welcomes you home with the words: "Well done, my good and faithful servant, come and share your master's happiness."

– Bro. Marlon de Leon



## In memory of Bro. Manny Fernandez

We know Emmanuel Sabuloa Fernandez as Bro. Manny Fernandez, born December 19, 1934 and died at the age of 85. Bro. Manny Fernandez funeral service was on May 21, 1pm at Oak Hill Memorial Park, Veteran Ave. He is survived by his wife Kim (Julie) and his brother Eddie. He was retired from PG&E. Bro. Manny loved to travel and joined many pilgrimage tours that Sis. Helen Songco organized. Bro. Chito de Quinto met Bro. Manny for the first time in 2001, on a pilgrimage tour to Portugal, France and Spain. They had such a good time that they went to tours together in Eastern Europe, 2002 and Italy, 2004. On their first tour, Bro. Manny volunteered to steer his elderly roommate in a wheelchair. This gesture showed his compassion and willingness to help. Bro. Manny joined the Cursillo in 2013 at Vallombrosa under the rectorship of Bro. Marlon and Bro. Chito sponsored him. Bro. Chito was so proud to successfully recruit him because, according to Bro. Manny, many Cursillistas tried but it was only after Bro. Chito asked that he agreed to join the Movement. They enjoyed friendship and even had a "For the Boys" group with

Bro. Phillip Songco, Bro. Mayor Joe Esteves, Kamal Aggarwal, Fr. Joe Galang and Fr. Ben Manding. They went out to dinner often, sharing Cursillo stories and different matters. Bro. Chito remembers how fast Bro. Manny drew his wallet to pay the bill, even though he knew that we have to pay our share. That was always how Bro. Manny was - so generous. Fr. Mark, pastor of St. Victor, and Fr. Ben Manding, pastor emeritus of St Martin, Sunnyvale and a longtime friend of Manny, presided over the services. Bro. Manny had many friends in the parish, in the Cursillo, in the Marian pilgrimage and other organizations. But attendance was limited to more than 10 people. The ceremony was zoomed to an undisclosed number of family members and friends. Eddie, the surviving younger brother shared some memories about Manny. That Manny was a very caring and generous brother who showered him with gifts overseas. He idolized his older brother and followed his example by joining the air force while Manny was with the navy. A few days before the Lord called him, Bro. Manny was upbeat and happy and talked about ordering steak to gain weight. Fr. Mark, Manny's pastor, thanked him for his devoted ministerial services (he was a faithful usher) and generous donor to the parish. As a Cursillista, pilgrim, faithful parishioner and good friend, Manny certainly deserves a great reward. However, his main credential to the Kingdom is Jesus' love for him and being an adopted child of God in Baptism.

– Fr. Ben Manding, Bro. Chito de Quinto



Bro. Manny Fernandez (first from left, back row)

## Vocation in my Vacation

### A visit to Mary's home

One of our most cherished moment was our visit to the Church of Annunciation during a 2018 tour of the Holy Land. It is also referred to as the Basilica of the Annunciation located in Nazareth, a town of lower Galilee in northern Israel. The church, which is one of the Holiest Christian sites, was rebuilt and completed in 1969 and stands over the site that tradition holds to be the home of the Virgin Mary. It is believed that this is where archangel Gabriel was sent from God, appeared to Her and said "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall name Him Jesus" (Luke 1:31) -- an event we celebrate as The Feast of Annunciation on March 25 each year. The most sensational discovery was a shrine dating back before the first church was built. Scratched on the base of a column appeared the Greek characters XE MAPIA, translated as "Hail Mary" - the archangel Gabriel's greeting to Mary. (seetheholyland.net). The lower level of the church enshrines a sunken grotto behind the altar that contains the traditional cave-home of the Virgin Mary. – **Bro. Sam Sebastian**



Altar at the Basilica of the Annunciation



Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth

### Medical mission beyond pandemic

Bro. Chito and I have always designated a vacation which involves going back to the Philippines at least once a year. Fortunately, at the start of the year, before the pandemic we were able to go and include a medical and dental mission in between trips. I was born and raised in a small town of Panghulo, Obando, Bulacan -- this is my first mission target. But what started as a work of charity and ended up being more than what I expected. I've always believed that charity begins at home and in giving. So, I agreed to do the medical and dental mission when a very good friend suggested it. The medical and dental mission involved a lot of coordination between the small barrio, their Sangguniang Bayan, the dentists, the medical missionaries from God's Helping and Healing Hands (who provided the nurses, doctors and volunteers) and from friends, classmates and relatives from the town who volunteered their time and talent as nurses, pharmacists and volunteers. It was a coordinated effort which started eight months before the target date, January 25. We were able to help a total of 600 individuals, including their families. We gave them rice, food, medicines, medical attention, dental care and prayers for healing and peace of mind. My take away from the mission was a bigger heart, fulfilled from helping so many needy people without means. Fast forward to March when the pandemic hit and the whole town of Obando was locked down. Most of the people from this barrio are people who are "No work, No pay". So when you are locked down, there is no way to get out and work. I called my sister and cousin who were with us during the mission to extend and pool our financial resources to help out. Financial help and prayers are all you can do when we are also sheltered in place in the US. The officers of the Sangguniang Bayan communicated their needs and we were able to give several sacks of rice and food to distribute to the needy. As the lock down continued, the scarcity of baby formula and medicines became a problem and we were able to provide them. We are so grateful to be the extension of the hand of our Lord in giving needed help, sharing the blessings given to us. As we always say in the Cursillo "Not everyone can do everything but each one of us can do something." Matthew 25:40 "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." – **Sis. Maria de Quinto**

## Ask and you shall receive an answer

**Q: Having gone through a time when Piety, Study and Action (PSA) were changed to Holiness, Formation and Evangelization (HFE) and then back again, sometimes, disconnect happens when a transition in leadership occurs. Now that we can finally read the translated thoughts of Eduardo Bonnin, is there a correlation between the “sounding and stabbing” technique to what Step by step refers to as “Hallway work”? Please tie in these two concepts or are they not related at all?**

A: (Regarding “sounding and stabbing”:) On the first day, we’d like to know the candidates by way of observation, study their attitudes, so we can place them. On the second day, we hope to understand them, explain to them certain truths, to clear their minds of uncertainty or reassure the candidates that no matter the circumstance in life, God loves them. On the third day, hopefully we may have answers to their questions and then allow us to accompany them in their 4th day journey. (Structure of Ideas, pp 35-51) for additional reading.

As to the Step by Step “hallway work”, it can refer to either physical location or (something) circumstantial – I see it as an opportunity to know the candidate during the Cursillo weekend, starting from the ride to the retreat house, the interaction during the dormitory assignment, meal times, recreation or during discussion and poster preparation at the decuria tables. All these situations may help in applying the technique of "sounding and the stabbing".

**Q: Our Pre-Cursillo sometimes come across Weekend applications from individuals who have unconfirmed reputation for going under a trance, levitating or performing alleged miracles. There would be a lot of word-of-mouth testimonies but nothing empirical. How do the Pre-Cursillo and screening committees react to this? If we have to deny the application for ambiguity or other reasons, how should they word the rejection letter or response?**

A: I think it is best to refer the case to the Spiritual Adviser, Lay Director, Regional Coordinator if necessary. It may or may not be in writing, that would depend on the method to handle the situation. But the best method is to have a dialogue among the persons such as the sponsor, the Pre-Cursillo Chair, LD and SA. Friendship is one of the three pillars of Cursillo. I think Eduardo Bonnin would be the first person to want to meet with that person to get to know the person. Why do I say this? I learned some stories from some of Eduardo’s friends when I attended the international CDC in October 2019 in Mallorca, that when he hears of somebody talking extensively about a certain someone, he will say this: “ Can you introduce me to that person”?

**Q: There are some concepts or elements that overlap with Cursillo methodology. But the rollos refer to them extensively. There seems to be no stand-alone book or text treatment for them. Thanks for The Study on Charism. But can you suggest a second party treatment (like Fr. David Knight’s and Fr. Salmani’s books) on Friendship or kerygma? Friendship and kerygma are popular topics that are assigned in the SOL and the technique speakers are always hard put to find reputable references for them other than psychology or feel-good books.**

A: I would refer your speaker to read up more on CDC materials where Eduardo Bonnin expounds on kerygma-- proclamation that God loves us. For SOL technique topics, you can go through the entire CDC talks and take it up one topic at a time. I would focus on Bonnin’s own writings, though limited because they are his thoughts, ideas, writings and reflections. Here’s one thing I learned through stories from people who have met Bonnin: he will want you to think about the subject matter, discern over it and come to find your own answer or conclusion. For Eduardo totally respects the person (the other pillar of Cursillo) and man’s free will . Of course, God is the number one pillar. – **Sis. Linda Buhay**

## A priest walks into a bar...

*Jesus, Moses and an old man went golfing. The first one to tee off is Moses. He smashes the ball and it's heading right for the water hazard before the green. Moses raises his club, the water parts and the ball makes it to the green. Jesus gets up to swing, cranks it out, and the ball is headed for the water hazard. Jesus closes his eyes and prays. The ball skips across the water and lands on the green two feet from the hole. The old man's turn comes and he drives the ball. The ball looks like it is going to drop directly into the water. A fish jumps from the water hazard swallowing the ball, as an eagle drops from the sky, grabbing the fish. As the eagle flies over the green, a bolt of lightning strikes the eagle, making it drop the fish. As the fish hits the green, it spits out the ball and the ball falls into the hole, making a hole in one. Jesus looks at Moses and says, "I really think I'm leaving Dad at home next time!" From [www.laughfactory.com](http://www.laughfactory.com)*

- **Very Best Religious Jokes, shared by Bro. Sam Sebastian**

*Why did Jesus go to a Japanese restaurant?*

*Because he loves miso. – A Prairie Home Companion Pretty Good Joke Book*

*A Jewish student was doing so well in school in all subjects except for Math. So, his parents decide to send him to a private Catholic School. At the end of the term, the boy got straight As. So, his parents asked him, "What motivated you to do so well in school?" He replied, "When I saw that guy nailed to a plus sign I knew they weren't fooling around." – A Prairie Home Companion Pretty Good Joke Book*

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