

# GO 4<sup>th</sup>



San Jose Filipino Cursillo Movement Newsletter

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## **Christmas Mass in the year of the pandemic**

*By Sis. Maria De Quinto*

I am sure all of you always look forward to celebrating our Cursillo Christmas Party at the Family Learning Center Hall at Our Lady of Peace. It was always reserved by Sis. Mercy Cereno, whose birthday falls close to our celebration.

This is one celebration where we joyfully gather and dress up for the occasion with all the trimmings and decorations in red and green, all ready for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We have fun, games, good food, priests, and seminarians visiting and rendering Christmas songs. There's music which brightens up the whole night, raffles, a show of camaraderie and renewal of friendship and commitment to our movement.

This year is different because of the pandemic which brought about the best and the worst in whatever situation we are.

For nine months, the Secretariat, under the leadership of our untiring lay director, Sis Robin, has been wondering and planning on and off our celebration this year.

Well, lo and behold, our final answer came to fruition before another Shelter in Place (SIP) was announced by Gov. Newsom. We decided to have a Cursillo Christmas Mass at Most Holy Trinity Church last December 5 at 10 am which was coordinated by Bro. Mario Lucas.



*Photo by Sis. Melinda Collins*

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## **Year of St. Joseph - 2021**

### **A message from the Spiritual Director**

*By Fr. Francis Kalaw*

We, the faithful people of the Diocese of San Jose are extremely blessed. The Holy Father, Pope Francis issued a decree launching a special year dedicated to St. Joseph, our diocese' very own patron saint, hailing him as a model of fatherhood and a key intercessor in modern times.

In the words of the Holy Father, "every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfillment of God's will." He proclaimed the special "Year of St. Joseph," to begin on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 2020 and extend to the same feast in 2021.

Pope Francis describes St. Joseph as a beloved, tender, and loving father. An obedient and accepting father. A father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

To answer a few questions that we might have, I have compiled some information from the Vatican website with regards to this special year dedicated to St. Joseph:

### **Why does the Church have years dedicated to specific topics?**

The Church observes the passage of time through the liturgical calendar -- which includes feasts such as Easter and Christmas, and seasons such as Lent and Advent. In addition, however, popes can set aside time for the Church to reflect more deeply on a specific aspect of Catholic teaching or belief. Past years designated by recent popes include a Year of Faith, Year of the Eucharist, and Jubilee Year of Mercy.

### **Why did the Pope declare a year of St. Joseph?**

In making his declaration, Pope Francis noted that this year marks the 150th anniversary of the saint's

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## Christmas Mass...

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Photo by Bro. Mario Lucas



Bro. Sam & Sis Sebastian

It was attended by a number of our brothers and sisters. Our spiritual director, Fr. Francis Kalaw, officiated the mass. Several priests also graced us with their presence, namely: Msgr. Willie Manrique, pastor of St. John Baptist, Vicar for Clergy Fr. Mark Gazingan, Pastor of St. Victor Fr. Jojo Page, Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Lavang Fr. Eddie Obero, Parochial Vicar of St. John Baptist Fr. Dan Urcia, Director of Life, Justice and Peace Fr. Edgar Elamparo, parochial vicar of Holy Spirit, Pastor of St. Cyprian Fr. Vincent Pineda, Spiritual Director of the Jesuit Center in Los Altos Fr. Andrew Rodriguez, and Parochial Vicar of Holy Family Fr. Celso Singson.

Our music was provided by the angelic voice of Sis. Chiara de Leon, accompanied by her father, Bro. Marlon. We were ushered by Bros. Sam Sebastian, Jun Esteves and Andy Ramones.

Adding to the spirit of hope and renewal was the secretariat members' unprecedented decision to renew and serve another year.

Overall, it was a very solemn and joyful gathering of friends despite the facemasks and social distancing -- what is now the new normal. Thank God for the many hands, who participated to make this possible, including the MHT volunteers.

To those who tried to log in, we are sorry. We found out belatedly that, as much as we wanted to make this occasion perfect, we forgot to livestream it. That goes to show, we are indeed human with flaws and given another chance to make it right the next time.

From our family to yours, may the Spirit of Christmas be in our hearts, may we meet again but in the meantime, let us meet and hug each other virtually and safely. May this New Year bring us a year of hope and healthy beginnings.

De Colores !!!



Photo by Bro. Mario Lucas



Sis. Chiara & Cecily De Leon

## Year of St. Joseph - 2021

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proclamation as patron of the Universal Church by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1870.

Pope Francis said the coronavirus pandemic has heightened his desire to reflect on St. Joseph, as so many people during the pandemic have made hidden sacrifices to protect others, just as St. Joseph quietly protected and cared for Mary and Jesus.

"Each of us can discover in Joseph, the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence, an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble," the Pope wrote.

He also said he wanted to highlight St. Joseph's role as a father who served his family with charity and humility, adding, "Our world today needs fathers."

### What special graces are available during this year?

As Catholics pray and reflect on the life of St. Joseph throughout the coming year, they also have opportunities to gain a plenary indulgence, or remission of all temporal punishment due to sin. An indulgence can be applied to oneself or to a soul in Purgatory.

An indulgence requires a specific act, defined by the Church, as well as sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, prayer for the Pope's intentions, and full detachment from sin.

Special indulgences during the Year of St. Joseph can be received by praying for the unemployed, entrusting one's daily work to St. Joseph, performing a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, or meditating for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer.

### Why does the Church honor St. Joseph?

Catholics do not worship saints but ask for their heavenly intercession before God and seek to imitate their virtues here on earth. The Catholic Church honors St. Joseph as the foster father of Jesus. He is invoked as the patron saint of the Universal Church. He is also the patron of workers, father, and a happy death.

In this time of uncertainty in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, it is appropriate to seek the intercessions of the saints for guidance and protection. St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus Christ, also the guardian and protector of the Church can truly be our intercessor. I invite you, my dear brothers, and sisters in the Cursillo movement. Let us join in heartfelt prayer and take his life as our model for fulfilling our personal call to holiness.

Merry Christmas and De Colores!

## Ask and you shall receive an answer

**Q: What metrics should we look at in filling up the quadrant sheet for the corridor work in Step by step? If the candidate is seen in church, if he volunteers for church work, which quantitative metrics? If we refer to qualitative metrics, how do we note that since it would most likely be only the sponsors who could attend to qualitative metrics? In our diocese, many times sponsors don't serve and will not be available in the Weekend nor do they attend Sponsors' night. One thing for sure, we should have standard metrics for the quadrant sheet so that we're talking about the same thing.**

**A: Quadrant Sheet - A list is made of the new Cursillistas assigning them numbers 1 to 4 in terms of where they are in their relationship to God. (1 being very close to God, 4 being far from Him). The same thing is done according to their attitude to the Cursillo itself. Pre-Cursillo calls for both the sponsor and team leaders to meet with the candidates to get to know them before the Cursillo weekend. This was made clear during the Pre-Cursillo talk during the National Encounter in Scranton.**

*"In the Pre-Cursillo, the team of leaders would have to dedicate the biggest percentage of their time praying for the spiritual success of the Three Day Cursillo, and the rest of the time getting to know the candidates and preparing the rollos. If the Pre-cursillo has been done as it should and the leaders know the candidates well, not just by phone, email, nor on the first night of the Three Day Cursillo but because they have met with the candidates several times and are now friends, then the work of the groups at the Three Day Cursillo is quite positive". (Pre-Cursillo Rollo, Miguel Sureda, 2019)*

*If the sponsor and team leaders know the candidate, they will know how to fill out the quadrant sheet. What kind of relationship does the candidate have with God and how open is he to attending Cursillo? See the example below.*

<b>Relationship to God</b>	<b>Attitude to attend Cursillo</b>
1- Very Close	1- Very Open
2 - Close	2- Open
3 - Far	3- Closed
4 - Very Far	4- Very Closed (--- National Cursillo English coordinator Cef Aguillon)

**Q: We're all finding ways to persevere in the lockdown. Some of us are doing great things on the internet and social media. But this also brings to light a problem: we notice a saturation point where we've invited almost everybody to witness at Ultreyas. So, we find sometimes that we are hearing the same stories but now it's online. Can we invite brothers and sisters from other dioceses to share their witness so there will be new perspectives at the Ultreyas?**

**A: Yes, you can invite a Cursillista from another diocese to give a witness talk. I know it happens; however, we should not be hearing the "same stories" if the Cursillista is growing in his/her Christian living and progressive conversion.**

*"The Witness Rollo, [at the Ultreya], is given by a Cursillista about how he or she lives the Christian life or how he or she would like to or is sad not to do so". (CDC Ultreya Rollo) If we base our witness on this criteria, then any Cursillista in attendance at the Ultreya should be able to give witness about how they are living a Christian life now. (--- National Cursillo English Coordinator Cef Aguillon)*

**Q: Friendship is one of the foundations of our movement. And yet there is no rollo dedicated to it nor a full Cursillo book treatment on it. The few citations on Friendship that we cite for SOL technique talks are great food for thought but not much for technique. A full treatise on Friendship explains Aristotle's premise up to virtuous friendship. It might be laborious but it would benefit some Cursillistas who have to fend off challenges like "friends have no secret from each other, are you my friend?" (at a group reunion). Or some whose notion of friendship is like a fraternity or sorority kind of requirement ( "Why did you have to go outside of the group when we can just talk about it?") Clearly, what the Cursillo means as "Friendship' should be well defined. Aside from the Biblical quotes how do we define the friendship that the Cursillo refers to?**

**A: You can find the rollo on Friendship by Eduardo Bonnin in the following:**

1. 1st Conversations at Cala Figuera (book)
2. The Thinking of Eduardo Bonnin I (book)
3. The Resource Center (National Website)

*There are 4 rollos on Friendship posted on the Resource Center, National Cursillo website.*

1. Friendship, An Essential Element in Cursillo
2. Friendship in the Pre-Cursillo
3. Friendship in the Cursillo
4. Friendship in the Pos-Cursillo

*Eduardo speaks about Friendship throughout the book, Eduardo Bonnin Aguilo, 100 Years: Biography & Mentality such as on pages 19, 20, 31, 121. (--- National Cursillo English Coordinator Cef Aguillon)*

## Close encounters with the far away

*Compiled by Sis. Maria DeQuinto*

**Q: In the spirit of new beginnings in 2021, will you consider becoming active again in the SJFCM now that Step by step allows Mananita? If no, why not?**



*Bro. Ed & Sis. Nita Cruz*

*"I can never be detached from the Cursillo as it was this movement that started me to get more involved with a variety of ministries in our parish. It gave me the drive to lead several ministries in our parish such as the Simbang Gabi for the last 15 years, started our Multi-Cultural Celebration also the same year (2005), our Columbiettes, an auxiliary to our Knights of Columbus seven years ago and other ministries that take too much time which keeps me quite busy throughout the year. So as you can see, I may not be active with the Cursillo but will be with you spiritually as always. At this time, I don't think I can take on any more ministries as I have enough on my plate right now. However, you will be happy to know that we have maintained our 4th Day Group Reunion since 2000 and in fact we meet twice a month during this pandemic via Zoom. We know that once a Cursillista, we are a Cursillista forever. Let us give the younger generation a chance to carry on. Hope to see you from time to time as we are able to do so. Stay safe and be well." - Sis. Nita Cruz*



*Bro. Nilo & Sis. Tessie Pacheco*

*"Deep in my heart and mind I never left the Cursillo movement. As we believe, once a Cursillista forever a Cursillista. Since the pandemic, I was able to participate in two School of Leaders through Zoom. I plan to join future activities when I can but I can't commit to be physically active though I gave to all, in contrast to my 19 years of actively serving my Cursillo ministry. We gained knowledge that we could grow where we were planted. From the Cursillo, I developed my close relationship with God and was able to enhance it, resulting in me being an active servant to Holy Family Parish, which is now my main ministry. Furthermore, being senior, I feel scared to drive, preventing me to go to places without my driver, Bro. Nilo. Consequently, attending Zoom meetings is perfect for me." - Sis. Tessie Pacheco*

## **Cursillo Sweethearts Part 3: Michael and Gigi (Jawod) Craighead**

They said 'yes' to the Lord, then to each other



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

*G: We were both invited to a Jesuit fund-raising event in May 2006. Michael was invited by his friend Vince Ye, I was invited by Sis. Flor Ramones. Vince, Sis. Flor, Bro. Andy, and Michael knew each other from when they went to a Pilgrimage years ago.*

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

*G: Michael is a loving, caring, understanding husband and supportive of my career. He embraced my Filipino culture without reservations. He is open to eat Filipino food except dinuguan and balut! (Laughs.) My parents have been living with us for seven years and not an issue with him.*

*M: Gigi makes me very happy. She is the funniest person to be around, hard-working, responsible, and devoted to the Lord. Being with Gigi, I always feel I'm in the presence of someone very special.*

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

*G&M: Over 2 years.*

**Q: When was the time that you were sure you were going to marry this Cursillista?**

*G: Michael witnessed the lowest point of my health even before we were married, Michael loved and took care of me unconditionally.*

*M: I knew I would marry Gigi the first minute I met her. Before meeting Gigi, my two favorite people in the world were my grandmothers. One grandmother was named Gigi and the other named Mary. Sometimes I would ask them, how would I know the right person to marry? They said, when you meet her you will definitely know. The night I met her, she introduced herself as Gigi and shortly mentioned her real name is Mary. Thank God for Grandmothers.*

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

*G: Even before Michael said "yes" to become a Cursillista, he was always open to join Ultreya or other Cursillo events but I'm grateful that he said "yes" to be a Cursillista.*

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

*G: This is a good idea but we need to consider couples with kids where both parents can't be away for days. We think, for older couples who don't have responsibility to baby sit kids or elderly, this will work. This might work for us if both of us can serve and will bring my parents as candidates. (Laughs)*

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

*G: Indeed, we were destined to meet at the right time. We are fortunate to receive God's blessings.*

**Q: Is it worth the arm twisting to get you into the weekend?**

*G: Yes*

*- Sis. Maria DeQuinto.*

## A few words from our Sponsor: Bro. Vince Songcayawon



Bro. Vince Songcayawon

**Q: Why did you want to be a Cursillista? Who sponsored you to the Weekend in what year? Who was your rector?**

*V: In 1983, our friends Mel and Connie Valderrama and Sam and Aster Pasion invited us to attend the Cursillo Weekend. Sis. Elsa and I agreed. Our Rector was Bro. Ric Posadas. I wanted to be a Cursillista in order to know more about the Catholic religion and grow spiritually.*

**Q: Can you list some of the sisters and brothers who were graduates of the first San Jose Filipino Cursillo movement in your Weekend? Was there an Action team that cooked for you in that Weekend? Was there a Mananita and, if yea, were they from the 4th day or another dioceses?**

*V: We were the first candidates in the San Jose Filipino Cursillo Weekend. Twelve candidates: Bro. Dean Fangonilo, Bro. Vic Evaristo, Bro. Max Ochangco, yours truly, and eight more that I cannot remember. One quit the following day. Our food was cooked by the Los Altos Seminary kitchen staff. We had Mananita and they came from other dioceses and some from San Jose Diocese who took their Cursillo in many different dioceses in the US and the Philippines. The mananiteros were away from the candidates. No physical contact.*

**Q: Is there a difference in the rollos then vs. the rollos now and explain?**

*V: Yes, there are some minor differences in title and number of rollos. Each rollo had a dedicated manual. We did not have Cursillo Beyond Cursillo then. We did not have a 3-day manual such as we now have. Some titles were changed, like Layperson in the Church which is now Laity – Layperson in the Church in the World.*

**Q: From the first Filipino San Jose Cursillo Weekend, how many graduates returned to make Cursillo their primary apostolate? To which groups did the other graduates go? What Cursillo activity then is not being done today and why?**

*V: From the 11 candidates, I was the only one who made Cursillo as my primary apostolate. The others became CIA – Cursillista inactive. The others went to Couples for Christ. The Cursillo activities then that we do not have now during the Weekend are Agape during Friday evening after dinner and Sunday morning Mananita. One activity that we used to do was Bible study – weekly or every two weeks by individual Group Reunions in homes.*

**Q: Share with us some tips on how to recruit candidate for the Weekend. List some Cursillistas not related to you who are still active in the Movement. Who was the Cursillista that was the toughest to recruit, tell us the story of how you got him or her.**

*V: In my experience, persistence is needed. But the basic technique is making friends with co-parishioners, relatives and casual acquaintances and friends. Some of my recruits who are active today are Sis. Melinda Collins, Bro. Sam, and Sis. Elena Sebastian, Sis. Aurora, Bro. Leo, and Sis. Susana Alapan, Sis. Remy Hailey. I had three men candidates who were the toughest to recruit because it took three years before they showed up in the Cursillo Weekend. In two of those three years, they did not show up during the Cursillo Weekend.*

**Q: Since we can't gather and do face-to-face interaction, how do you propose we conduct our SOLs, Ultreyas and other activities? Can friendship exist without physical contact? If yes, how?**

*V: We have to make sure that all active Cursillistas know how to use their computers or cell phone to access video talks/presentations/programs. Those who are good in multi-media use should volunteer to teach other Cursillistas. Friendship can be maintained by video Group Reunions and Ultreyas.*

**Q: Step by step suggests that control of the Weekend post-rollo discussions be given to the candidate presidents without staff table leaders and deans. How do you suggest we rein in the discussions after the rollos so they don't go all over and over time?**

*V: The presidents should be assigned in advance on Thursday night and should be given training on how to handle a group discussion and should be directed by the rector when to stop the discussion.*

**Q: Because Step by step puts a premium on friendship, it has been suggested that we take two years to prep for a Weekend – first year to form friends for recruitment, then the second for team formation. Will we not lose momentum this way? How would you prep for the Weekend and still fulfill Step by step's requirement on friendship?**

*V: The Cursillo Weekend Team should be formed now and then embark on the program on how to build friendship among the team members and learn the techniques in making friends for candidate recruiting, again by using video/online medium.  
- Sis. Maria DeQuinto*

## Noche Buena in the new normal



Bro. Bobby, Sis. Melinda and Sis. Meggie Collins

Noche buena is different this year for us. With my daughter, Sis. Meggie being away from home (she's currently in Syracuse New York), due to travel restrictions and the hassle of quarantine protocols, she won't be able to come home until January 2021. Normally, every December 24th, our evening would consist of a festive family dinner, a room surrounded by beautiful lights and Christmas music, lighted fireplace and most of all surrounded by love of family. This year, we will be celebrating noche buena with family and Sis. Meg virtually on Zoom Meeting or FaceTime. It's a new normal to celebrate this Christmas holiday get-together virtually. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours!

## A priest walks into a bar...

### The Bible from the mouth of Babes Part 1

*This comes from a Catholic elementary school. Kids were asked questions about the Old and New Testaments. The following is straight from the mouth of babes, unedited.*

In the first book of the Bible, Guinnessis, God got tired of creating the world, so he took the Sabbath off.

Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark, which the animals come on to in pears.

Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day but a ball of fire by night.

The Jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with the unsympathetic Genitals.

Samson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebe like Delilah.

Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the Apostles.

Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread which is bread without any ingredients.

The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the 10 amendments.

The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.

The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.

Moses died before he ever reached Canada.

Then Joshua lead the Hebrews in the battle of Geritol.

*(From a shared 2001 email message download)*

Unto Us  
a Child is Born



MERRY CHRISTMAS  
& A JOYFUL NEW YEAR TO ALL!

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign:  
The Virgin will conceive and give birth to a son,  
and will call him Immanuel - Isaiah 7:14

-SJFM Secretariat and Communications Team