

GO 4th

Issue 7 Volume 2
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THE SAN JOSE FILIPINO

CURSILLO MOVEMENT NEWSLETTER

SJF Cursillo News Bits

- *In Memory of our beloved departed: Let's pray for our departed loved ones at the Cursillo Family Memorial Mass in November. Watch out for email announcements for the venue and details.*
- *Save the Date: 2022 Christmas party on December 4, 2022. Watch out for email Invitations in the next weeks.*
- *Change of Hands in Region XI: Welcome Sis. Penny De Leon, our new Region XI Filipino Language Coordinator. And thanks to Sis. Rosalinda Pascual, our past Coordinator for a great service and leadership to Region XI Filipino group.*
- *See you at the monthly Ultreya, every first week of the month. Watch out for the email announcements for details.*
- *Keep showing up – the SOL is counting on you! See you at the School of Leaders, every 3rd Friday of the month. Watch out for the meeting email invites and Facebook announcements.*
- *Let's pray for your intentions. Join the Call to Pray the (Cursillo Family) Rosary every Monday at 7:30pm via WebEx. Use the same meeting ID and passcode for all WebEx meetings.*
- *Help us tell the San Jose Filipino Cursillo story. We're looking for volunteer writers, photographers and editors for the Go 4th SJFCM newsletter. Contact anyone in the Secretariat team- we'd love to hear from you.*
- *Pray, study and grow where you are planted: Visit the National Cursillo website for information and resources on rollos, events and prayer requests. www.natl-cursillo.org*

From the Spiritual Director's Desk

Meditation on The Assumption of Our Lady

By Fr. Francis Kalaw

Every year on the 15th of August, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, how Mary was conceived without Original Sin in her mother's womb. She is an essential part for salvation and for redemption that Jesus Christ has given to us. As the early Church reflected on how the angel greeted her, "Hail full of grace! The Lord is with you," the Church realized, through revelation and through faith, that Mary was conceived without sin and that her conception was immaculate.

That is what this feast day celebrates. It celebrates Mary's unique role, her cooperation with God in the mystery of redemption, in the Word made flesh. It celebrates her uniqueness. She is unique, in that she is conceived without original sin. God preserved her through the redemption of Christ from the moment of her conception. Mary never committed a sin. She was full of grace. We see her tremendous cooperation with our God.

We are told she was greatly troubled at what the angel said to her and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Yet in the midst of it, she was fully cooperative. She was told, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He ... will be called Son of the Most High." Being a virgin, she raises the question, "How can this be?" She is given the promise and revelation of God. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

One can imagine what ran through her mind. When she is told that the child she is to bear is the Son of God, she realizes she is the Mother of God. That revelation is given to her. She knows that in her humanness she is fully unworthy of that, but she trusts completely in God. She surrenders to Him in total obedience. "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." In those words of obedience, she cooperates with God.

And here we are, 2,000 years later, remembering this moment, honoring the young woman who is at the center of it, and celebrating God's extravagant wisdom, generosity, and love.

And we do it because this moment didn't just happen. This feast we celebrate, the Immaculate Conception, commemorates a great mystery and a miracle: that God so loved the world that not only did he send us his son...but he also gave us Mary.



Meditation on The Assumption of Our Lady cont'd

To believe this we have to first believe that God acts in human history, and that he does so with a purpose, with design, and with love.

In Mary, God saved humanity once more. Like Noah, whom God called to save humanity from the flood, God called Mary. Noah could have refused or said no, and Mary could have, too. But they didn't. Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word," – her fiat, this "yes" to God changed human history.

This key phrase at the heart of this Gospel, is also at the heart of this feast: May it be done to me according to your word. This is where everything began. Here is a complete and selfless desire to do the will of God, offered with humility, and a sense of purpose.

I have to ask myself: Could I say anything like that? Could any of us say that today?

Could any of us be so willing to surrender to God so eagerly, so completely... so, beautifully?

In an age when personal freedom is prized above all else, when the culture tells us you don't have to do anything that is uncomfortable or inconvenient... this girl named Mary says something most people today would find altogether shocking.

To an angel of the Lord, and to the God who created her, she says, "If you want it, I'll do it."

Because of Mary's faith and prayer life, when the angel asked her if she would become the mother of God, she answered, "YES." She did not know that her fiat, her yes, would take her to the foot of the cross. She did not know that her son would be rejected by the world. But, she continued to trust in God.

Today, we're invited to say "YES" as Mary did. Say yes to Jesus. He is inviting us to follow him more closely. The world offers us many other things, but we have to remain firm in our "yes" to Christ. And, what does that "yes" mean?

- Yes, I'm going to choose to honor life as sacred from natural conception to natural death.
- Yes, I'm going to choose to honor my promises, my marriage vows.
- Yes, I'm going to choose to end the cycle of violence and stand up for those in need.
- Yes, I'm going to choose to respect my body and honor it as a gift.
- Yes, I'm going to choose to put on love and kindness even when I've been offended.

In the Covenant, which God made with Noah, the sign given was the rainbow. The sign of the new covenant is not a rainbow, but the Eucharist: the breaking of the body of Christ and the shedding of His blood. The Eucharist was made for us the sign of a new humanity in Christ.

Now it is our turn to choose. Which way will we choose? The way of Adam and Eve who wanted their own way more than they wanted God's, or the way of Christ and Mary, the new Adam and the new Eve, who showed us that the way to God is by means of the Eucharist to become a Eucharistic people?

If we believe that God intervenes and acts in our lives, we must also accept that God desires to act in us as well. To believe that God acts for our good also means that we can choose either to make a generous response or to make a weak response to such a personal God.

Do we have the courage to say with Mary "I am the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word?"

Mary's "yes" allowed Christ to dwell in her. In the same way, in Communion, Christ lives on in us. Say "yes" now and always! And by Mary's example, give your life over to Christ because it's worth it.

St. Pope John Paul II said, "Life with Christ is a wonderful adventure." Give God your very self just as he gives himself to you in the Eucharist. You will not regret it. De Colores!



In Memoriam

Sis. Aster Pasion



I'd like to respect the dead, so I won't repeat the more colorful labels I heard to describe Sis. Aster.

But no doubt about it, in the Cursillo Movement, Sis. Aster Pasion is the right man for the job. Because she had the balls to make unpopular decisions and make it stick.

One time, for example, she told our cook in the Cursillo Weekend, "Sis. Fe, huwag mo namang sasarapan ang luto. Natutulog sila during the talks."

Another thing about Sis. Aster -- nothing fazes her, as though she were made of unbreakable steel.

She drew flak from a lot of Cursillistas for being by the book. She took a lot of ribbing from hubby Bro. Sam and even from Monsignor Willie Manrique. But she was unruffled.

When she was still mobile and vital, Sis. Robin and I marched with Sis. Aster for the Walk for Life Movement. We'd start from Our Lady of Peace church and walk all the way to Planned Parenthood clinic along Naglee in San Jose.

We'd stand with pro-life signs at Stevens Creek boulevard, and we'd be screamed at, flipped with the bird and spat at by passing motorists. Sis. Aster just stood her ground, praying the rosary fervently as we were instructed. This was more than 10 years ago before the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade.

One time, I asked for glasnost – a Russian word for openness – in the Cursillo newsletter "The Fishers of Men" when there was still no Google Translate and she couldn't look it up. But she took it all in stride and told me with a smile, "Bro. Harvey, I hope that was a good word."

Sis. Aster started some traditions in the Cursillo Movement.

She came up with Adopt-a-priest at the Christmas party when the Cursillo Movement would invite priests and seminarians in the diocese for good cheer, dinner and Christmas envelopes.

Because of Sis. Aster, the Cursillo Movement in San Jose had its own version of the Silicon Valley power lunch. In this case it was dinner. If there will be an Ilocano history of the Cursillo, this one should be in their annals.

After a policy-making meeting at the end of the week, Sis. Aster was among those who would be kumarkarow manen. Meaning, we'd all adjourn at Carrows to discuss strategy and fellowship for the Movement. Sadly, Carrows is gone, it's now Coffee Lovers in Tully Road.

In the Cursillo, we say that a Cursillista's life may be the only bible that others will read. As new Cursillistas then, for Sis. Robin and I, Sis. Aster and Bro. Sam were chapters in our bible.

We saw how a first gen couple struggled. The joy of having children, the loss, the burden when the children stopped being cute. And just when you thought you were done, here come the grandchildren. And you can't help but find them cute again, your new apos-tolate.

Sis. Aster and Bro. Sam Pasion are a Cursillo first family. They were among the first to serve in the Weekend and the Secretariat. They are part of the Old Guard in the original San Jose Filipino Cursillo Movement.

In her passing, Sis. Aster will be missed but we will remember her in the legacy she started in the Movement.

She is like my favorite Marvel superhero – her will was like unbreakable adamantium steel. And she was the best at what she did. De Colores Sis. Aster! (Bro. Harvey Barkin)

Sis. Flor Ramones

I have been one of the lucky ones who met Sis. Flor through the Cursillo.

She is funny, pious, generous and dedicated to our community.

When there are events in the Cursillo, she never fails to call all the sisters who had their weekend under her rectorship.

She was generous with her time, finances and advice to help and improve her environment.

She rarely says no to any request especially in delivering rollos in the weekend.

I vividly remember her making sure that we sing "People" by Barbara Streisand because her rollo would inadvertently be the Study of the Environment or the action song "Building Community" when it was Christian Community in Action.

Sis. Flor spent a lot of time in Pampanga. People who familiar with her know she does not pronounce the "H." And when there's an "H," she pronounces the word without the "H." So, I used to tease her, asking "What's 'appening?" Sis. Helen Songco calls her "Hugenia."

She unabashedly shared how her intonation and misplaced "H" was embarrassing especially to her three boys at Mass when she was lector at St. Victor's church.

When the two elder boys enlisted, Sis. Flor became even more prayerful for their safe return. She went to Mass twice everyday – once to listen to the Word, the second time to contemplate on the readings.

When we were in Seattle for the National Encounter (in 2018) she told us she gave Bro. Andy a "mission impossible" and that her instructions will "self-destruct" if he chose to accept it. When Bro. Andy asked, she told her to find a "tabo."

Sis. Flor and Bro. Andy were with me, Sis. Helen Songco, Fr. Joe Galang and Fr. Ben Manding in three pilgrimages.

I am shocked that my traveling companion is gone. But I am heartened that Sis. Flor passed away in her sleep. Many of us pray for a peaceful passage. Sis. Flor stormed heaven with prayers – that's why she was granted a painless exit. She could be a worthy intercessor for our prayers.

You are loved and will be greatly missed. Thanks for the cherished memories. De Colores! (Sis. Maria de Quinto)



Cursillistas in Community

Fr. Francis Birthday Lunch



Fr. Francis' birthday was on September 9 but it was celebrated with a pot luck lunch on September 10 at St. Cyprian parish, Sunnyvale. PHOTO BY SIS. ROBIN BARKIN

Leaders Retreat at Queen of Apostles, July 30

Fr. Angelo David talked about the challenges of discipleship in the pandemic. Fr. Francis Kalaw gave the meditation on shepherding and service in the leadership of a vocation.

"Therefore, that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an Angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated.

Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me.

But he said to me, "My Grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." I will rather boast most gladly my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ, for when I am weak, then I am strong."

- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

SJFCM Cursillistas attend 1st on-site Nat'l Encounter after 2 years of lockdown



Bro. Sam and Sis. Elena Sebastian, Bro. Harvey and Sis. Robin Barkin, and Sis. Linda Buhay attended the 32nd National Encounter last July 21 – 24 at Chapman University in Orange County.

The event coincided with the 65th year anniversary of the Cursillo Movement in the US. More than 500 Cursillistas from different regional dioceses came out of lockdown, alongside 19 priests, 11 deacons and two bishops.

The Encounter's theme was renewing one's faith and further understanding the roots of the Movement.

Some of the talks referenced books hot off the press translated from Eduardo Bonnin's notes. Among them were: 100 Years Biography Mentality May 4. 1917 – 2017 by Eduardo Bonnin Aguilo, Cursillo History & Memory by Francisco Pujol and History of a Charism by Eduardo Bonnin Aguilo.

100 Years features rare photos of Bonnin in the military, the first Cursillo in Cala Figuera; details about the De Colores song and the prison story which is often used as a witness story for evangelization.

Lawyer and manager Francisco Forteza Pujol penned Cursillo History & Memory. Pujol worked with Bonnin on Structure of Ideas, Cursillo: A Reality Not Yet Realized and Neglected Evidence.

In Cursillo History, Pujol details the intrigues, errors and manipulations in the development of the Cursillo Movement. He relates the first controversies of the Movement when they were accused of coercing people to attend weekends and the disagreement between Bonnin and Bishop Enciso.

Through correspondence (1990 – 1997) with Fr. Cesareo Gil, Bonnin reveals the progression of the Movement and his struggle to keep the foundational ideas to keep the Cursillo authentic.

National Cursillo Service Administrator Nadia Lopez coordinated the various committees responsible for the Encounter. Region XI Service Coordinator Rosalinda Pascual headed a majority of Filipino Cursillista volunteers in various capacities during the Weekend. It was Sis. Rosalinda's final Encounter as her term ended in September. (Bro. Harvey Barkin)

Step by step dry run yields 'can do' attitude, prospective weekend venue



SJFCM Secretariat members and other Cursillistas spent August 26 – 28 at San Juan Bautista to see how Step by step can be adapted into the SJFCM weekend schedule.

The group of less than 20 planned to compress the Step by step schedule into a two-day practice run. But it was done before the scheduled Sunday deadline.

San Juan Bautista is not new to some Cursillistas. Some in the group began their Cursillo life there under the rectorship of Sis. Mercy Sacman. Revisiting the site, many in the group found the privacy, space and accommodations suitable and more economical than Vallambrosa.

The group decided that the venue was suitable for a coed weekend, so long as separation of men's group and women's group can be maintained.

Before the team left, a plan was made to book San Juan Bautista for 2023's weekend.

The group formed a table panel and simulated the Step by step in real time, paused for questions and clarifications. The dry run schedule followed a Weekend schedule with breaks for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

In reviewing Step by step, the group agreed to the inclusion of the bankruptcy stories, the jokes and the games. The procedure for the corridor work has yet to be detailed. The 5:1 ratio for staffers:candidates was not thoroughly discussed nor was the supposed bus trip for both staff and candidates.

But the general feeling as the group left San Juan Bautista was that it could be done and there was no longer any doubt that Step by step will be part of the weekends. (Bro. Harvey Barkin)



A priest walks into a bar

3 jokes from Sis. Maria

The couple was 85 years old and had been married for 60 years. Though they were far from rich, they managed to get by because they watched their pennies. Though not young, they were both in good health, largely due to the wife's insistence on healthy food and exercise for the last decade.

One day, their good health didn't help when they went on a rare vacation and their plane crashed, sending them off to Heaven.

They reached the pearly gates and St. Peter escorted them inside. He took them to a beautiful mansion, furnished in gold and fine silks, with a fully stocked kitchen and a waterfall in the master bath. A maid could be seen hanging their favorite clothes in the closet.

They gasped in astonishment when St. Peter said, "Welcome to Heaven. This will be your home now."

The old man asked Peter how much all of these was going to cost.

"Why, nothing," Peter replied, "remember, this is your reward in Heaven."

The old man looked out the window and saw a championship golf course, finer and more beautiful than any ever built on Earth. "What are the greens fees?" grumbled the old man.

"This is heaven," St. Peter replied. "You can play for free, every day."

Next they went to the clubhouse and saw the lavish buffet lunch, with every imaginable cuisine laid out before them, from seafood to steaks to exotic desserts, free flowing beverages.

"Don't even ask," said St. Peter to the man, "this is Heaven. It is all free for you to enjoy."

The old man looked around and glanced nervously at his wife.

"Well, where are the low fat and low cholesterol foods, and the decaffeinated tea?" he asked.

"That's the best part," St. Peter replied, "you can eat and drink as much as you like of whatever you like, and you will never get fat or sick."

This is Heaven!"

The old man pushed, "No gym to work out at?"

"Not unless you want to," was the answer.

"No testing my sugar or blood pressure or..."

"Never again. All you do here is enjoy yourself."

The old man glared at his wife and said, "You and your friggin' bran muffins. We could have been here 10 years ago!"



Little Mary Margaret was not the best student in Catholic school. Usually, she slept through the class.

One day the nun called out to her while she was sleeping. "Tell me, Mary Margaret, who created the universe?"

When Mary Margaret didn't stir, little Johnny behind her, who was her friend, took his pencil and jabbed her in the rear. "God almighty!" shouted Mary Margaret. The nun said, "Very good" and resumed teaching the class.

A little later, the nun asked Mary Margaret, "Who is our Lord and Savior?"

But Mary Margaret didn't stir from her slumber. Once again, Johnny came to her rescue and stuck Mary Margaret in the butt. "Jesus Christ!" shouted Mary Margaret and the nun again said, "very good." And Mary Margaret went back to sleep.

But the nun asked her, "What did Eve say to Adam after she had her twenty-third child?"

Again, Johnny came to the rescue. This time Mary Margaret jumped up and shouted, "If you stick that thing in me one more time, I'll break it in half!"

The nun fainted.



After Adam stayed out late a few nights, Eve became suspicious.

"You're running around with another woman, admit it!" she demanded.

"What other woman?" Adam shot back. "You're the only one here."

That night, Adam was fast asleep when he is awoken by Eve poking him in the chest.

Adam asked, "Eve, what are you doing?"

"Counting your ribs."



KEEP **SHOWING**
UP
San Jose Filipino Cursillo
School of Leaders



Make a friend. Be a friend. And bring your friend to Christ.

Fr. Francis Kalaw

Bro. Sam Sebastian

Sis. Emma Forlanda

Sis. Maria De Quinto

Sis. Marcy Reyes

Sis. Melinda Collins

Sis. Desi & Bro. Mario Lucas

Bro. Harvey & Sis. Robin Barkin

Bro. Marlon De Leon

*Send us your suggestions for topics, questions and photos. **De Colores!***