

SEPTEMBER 2020

Newsletter for the Cursillo Movement of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

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A MESSAGE FROM MERYL

Cursillo – Vice-President's Message for Sharing – September 2020

COVID-19 has brought about many changes to our “normal” way of life, we are told to keep our distance; not to gather in groups; don't sing; don't dance; stay at home; isolate! This all seems excessive. We are all meant to live together, support one another, hug and embrace each other aren't we?

So, for many of us we have become isolated and unsure of what is “safe” and what is not. When will it all end? Will it all end? And where is God in all this? These are questions being asked.

In Ecclesiastes 3:1 we read, “There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under Heaven”.

I see that God is with us today. Perhaps with lockdown we are being given more time to deeply reflect on just where He is for us. We have been given a time to slow down, to put aside activities, to be still and listen. How we have managed this will be different for each one of us.

For myself, I have spent many hours in my craft room, just me and Jesus, sewing bags for the care packs we put together at Christmas time for the seafarers who visit Newcastle during the week of Christmas. I have also made many “Thinking of You” cards for Rick to write a personal message and these cards are included in the packs sent out to the ships that are now coming into our Port each week. This is just a small thing we can do to let these men (and some women) know that we care for them and are praying that they are soon able to go home to their families – a way of connecting during these current restrictions.

I have also kept a daily diary of my journey with Jesus at this time, starting off by writing “Yesterday.....” Sometimes it's hard to think just what “we” did do yesterday.

I am a “people-person”, so these times of isolation from groups etc., have been difficult for me. However, I hear those words written so long ago “There is a time for everything” and I know I am not alone and everything is happening for a purpose, and I must accept and learn from it.

In this way I have also had to “step up” to take on the role of temporary President for our Cursillo Movement. As Vice-President this is my responsibility but one I didn't really think I would have to take on. At the moment there is not really a lot I can, or need, to do. However, once again I hear those words “There is a time for everything”.

My prayer for all Cursillistas at this time is to stay connected; listen with your heart; and to reach out wherever possible in whatever way God asks of you today.

De Colores

Meryl McCosker – Vice-President



FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON

From the Spiritual Advisor

As we go about our everyday living, let's take the time to place ourselves where God needs us to be. Perhaps the balance of time spent on Prayer or Study or Action has needed adjustment in order to make sense of how to best respond to imposed restrictions because of the Covid-19 virus. We may be surprised at the way our spiritual growth takes a new direction as we strive to be more Christ-like. **Time is an important tool** to be used wisely and this includes prayer and reflection.

Is there anything you have seen or heard recently that has caused you to pause and reflect?
 What have you learnt from other people?
 How are you becoming more open to God's will for you?
 When have you been particularly aware of God's presence?
 How have your prayers been answered?

We can still encourage and support each other in our faith journey.

*For everything there is a season;
 and a time for every purpose under heaven;
 a time to be born, and a time to die;
 a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
 a time to kill, and a time to heal;
 a time to break down, and a time to build up;
 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
 a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
 a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
 a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
 a time to seek, and a time to lose;
 a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
 a time to tear, and a time to sew;
 a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
 a time to love, and a time to hate;
 a time for war, and a time for peace. Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8*

Sharing a few thoughts ... from Anne Moloney

CURSILLO IN AFRICA

3 Attempts/Efforts

- Francophones
- Portuguese
- European Group

DO WE STOP?



It was Portugal's initiative to implement the Cursillo Movement in Portuguese speaking African countries, starting in 1963, countries that, at that time, were its colonies, that is, Angola and Mozambique (in addition to Macao and Timor Leste, in Asia).





The Cursillos were taken to the French-speaking countries of Africa by the Francophone Cursillo Movement of Canada.

Cursillos in French

**TOGO Atakpame, 2005 Lomé, 2005 Abomey 2006
Kpalimé 2006 Sokodé 2011 BURKINA FASO, 2012**

Cursillos in English

Durban, 2009 Uganda, 2014 Lesoto, 2017

Ghana, thanks to the sponsorship of Germany's MCC, in Oct 2018

South Africa continues to grow. More than 800 people have lived their Cursillo in 2 different dioceses: Durban and Johannesburg.

Burkina Faso will not hold any Cursillo this year, mainly due to the situation of terrorism in the country. There is a total of 35 trainees now.

The Diocese of Lomé in Togo will have held 15 Cursillos in 2019 and the Diocese of Atakpamé 11. In total 454 people have lived the Cursillo experience in Togo.

Benin will have held 11 Cursillos this year, all of them in the diocese of Abomey. A total of 362 people have lived their Cursillo since the beginning.

The OMCC assumed the Africa Project: contacts and meetings are being planned with a view to continuing to encourage the MCC in the African continent so that, at the outset, the National Secretariats are strengthened and, in their time, a new International Group can be created representing the African SN.

At the First Regular Meeting of the current OMCC, held in September 2018, in Querétaro, Mexico, it was decided that the OMCC would officially assume responsibility for the development of the MCC in the African continent for which it will continue to have the irreplaceable help of all International Groups and National Secretariats that are willing to get involved in that task.



Economic Cooperation

Your support in the form of \$3 per person
is needed to sustain the Cursillos.

\$1 for GECC-Africa;

\$1 for Asia Pacific Group (APG);

\$1 for World Body CM (OMCC)

Would you like to donate?

Our Maitland- Newcastle Secretariat would like to contribute to the \$3 CAMPAIGN in response to a request from the Australian National Secretariat.

Our Treasurer, Rick McCosker, will ensure that donations from our Cursillistas reach the Australian National Secretariat.

For ease of collection, we ask that the Contact Person for each Group Reunion collect \$3 per person in their group and direct deposit (by 27 November 2020)

to: BSB: 062 815 Account: 00328161 Reference: Agent 5086Surname

THANK YOU!

SEEING GOD AT WORK IN THE ORDINARY

A BIG DAY OUT WITH A PROFESSIONAL (Seeing God at work in the ordinary)

Last week (July 3) I had the opportunity to ride shotgun with my brother Vince on the egg delivery run that he does each week for an egg farmer from Greta. The delivery run goes up the North Coast as far as Coffs Harbour. The day trip is about 900km and takes about 12 to 13 hours. I joined him at 6.30am at the BP heavy vehicle refuelling station and rest stop at Beresfield. We made the trip in a Toyota Hi-ace loaded with close to 1 tonne of eggs on board. The eggs are packed in boxes containing 15 cartons of eggs each weighing about 15kg.

While this might sound rather boring, the trip was far from being as such. It was a great opportunity to spend the day with Vince and share story, share life and share the space!

The journey up the north coast is one I have not taken for at least seven years as for some reason I always avoided it because of the traffic and the nature of the road. Thankfully, the road is much improved and is virtually a freeway from south of Coffs to Raymond Terrace. On the other hand Vince has travelled the road quite often over the years and in his late teens and early twenties used to holiday up that way.

Over the course of the day there were stories told of events during his travels including his visits to Port Macquarie to Jim – a colleague of my father. He spoke of him and my brother Trevor holidaying up at Jim and his wife ‘Sammy’s’ place when they took them to Coffs Harbour for a day out. Jim loaded a watermelon into the boot of the blue Cortina and off they went. After arriving at Coffs they sat at a picnic table in a small park near the highway and ate the watermelon – Simple pleasures indeed. Vince showed me the picnic table which is still there as we went through Coffs after the egg drop off at North Coffs.

As we came home through Coolongolook I heard the story of moving ‘Barefoot’s’ bee hives from there to Branxton – humour at its best!

Being a passenger, I was able to take in the wonders of nature – seeing the hills behind Taree as we approached from the south with their multiple camel humps, observing the clouds – some with a thin place with the sun shining through that resembled the thin elbow of a well-worn cardigan. The sun’s rays shining through layers of clouds that emulated the classic ‘God cloud’ with rays like voices from God.

The run made cargo drops at Karuah, Bulahdelah, Taree [2 drops], Harrington Waters, Port Macquarie, Nambucca, Coffs Harbour North and Boambee. At each drop off, while the unloading facilities differed from loading docks, back doors and sometimes front doors, the routine was the same. The customer representative had to be found, paperwork presented and offloading of the appropriately identified boxes of product in the manner that the customer wanted. Items were checked and signed for and the delivery docket book returned to the cab of the vehicle. And because of CoViD there was sanitizing after every time we returned to the vehicle.

The customer representatives were a diverse bunch ranging from some who were meticulous in checking boxes whose humour would be tested if the mood was not gauged, to those who could be obstructive and unhelpful and to those who climbed down from the loading dock to lend a hand. This latter description fitted the young fellow at one of our drops who appeared with his tattoos, waxed handle bar grandfather moustache reaching his ears and orange loopy earrings almost the size of hen’s eggs!

What amazed me was the ease with which all this delivery happened and the high degree of ease that differing needs of customer’s representatives, in the way they went about their business, was accommodated by my brother Vince. His gentle manner and attention to detail was handled with a great sense of respect and dignity to the person representing the customer. I should not have been amazed at this, as it is who Vince is – his deep sensitivity never faltered as the long day unfolded. It was clear that he was deeply respected and accepted by these people.

While this was the personal side of it all, the professionalism and courtesy extended to the very act of driving purposefully but with great care and respect for other road users. While the day was full there did not seem to be a sense of urgency or rush and we made it back safely and we didn't break an egg!

To sum up then, it was a rewarding day out to share it with a professional, both by his driving expertise and his relationship with the firm's customer representatives. For me, as a person trying to live the Gospel as a Christian Catholic using and living the Cursillo tools, it was an example that refreshed my soul to see this day unfold through someone who came to a profound belief in God's divine love and providence through a tough school. It was a blessed day of many colours!

I think the wall hanging that my sister gave me years ago depicts the day: '*Where there is love, nothing is too much trouble and there is always time*'. (Abdu Bahia)

De Colores,

John A



DROPPING THE BALL

How easy it is to “drop the ball”!

Missing the last 2 Secretariat meetings as well as the last 2 months of Group Reunions in Old Bar has rendered me ‘at sea with God’. Luckily, I was in Forster last week and was able to join in their Group Reunion. As I reflected on my Apostolic Action, the main thought or vision of my past few months was ‘Apostolic INACTION’. Lately, my action plan has been thrown into disarray.

Firstly, in February, I was diagnosed once again with breast cancer so a new routine developed of fortnightly visits to the Cancer Clinic for treatment. In March the COVID crisis meant that our little Church was no longer open for Mass. So another routine developed of celebrating Mass online (sometimes in my pyjamas!) – which was rather convenient! My cancer treatment leaves me with a compromised immunity so there has been no shopping or ukulele group or volunteer work. There was no Old Bar Ultreya in March and subsequent Ultreyas were also cancelled. The upcoming Cursillo National Encounter was also postponed until October 2021. Technology became my friend with Zoom, Facebook and online shopping.

In May we put our house on the market as we have decided to downsize into a new ‘Over 55s Resort’ being built in Old Bar called “Clifton”. Consequently, much of April and May was spent packing boxes, cleaning cupboards and fine tuning our plans. My Cursillo fieldwork was being overlooked by June as my square metre seemed to be shrinking around me! I was focused on myself – my clean house, my health issues and my plans for an uncertain future.

There have been no Old Bar Group Reunions since June, and now two Cursillistas have moved away from Old Bar and another has become very unwell. Work commitments make it difficult for another Cursillista to attend so there are only 3 Old Bar Cursillistas and some faithful visitors from Forster Tuncurry who can join the group from time to time.

In July my sister, Teresa, died after a 5 year struggle with Ovarian cancer. The whole family is devastated. She was a cherished older sister and will be missed terribly. Oh Lord what is going on? What are YOU DOING? (*“Linda, what are YOU doing?” I hear in reply!*)

Our house was sold at the end of July but our new home is still under construction and may not be finished until the end of November. So we have decided to spend a couple of months visiting family and friends, firstly up north in Queensland, then down south in Canberra. We will be back in Old Bar by mid October with possibly 6-8 weeks left to wait before moving into our new home!! It seems that 2020 has been turning our lives upside down as it has for so many.

Yes I have definitely “dropped the ball” with regards to my spiritual life. Good reasons are plenty and easy to find; family worries, finances stretched, plans frustrated and friends move away. And now there’s a realisation that not only is my action plan in disarray, but I’m having difficulty with my prayer life too! My plans for 2020 have dissolved.

Oh Lord what are you doing???

Oh Linda what are YOU DOING??

I once read, that God is like the sun...always there and always shining, even on the cloudiest day or the darkest night. It's true! Can you recall that lovely surprise, when travelling on a plane, for example, on a dull, overcast day, as you rise above the clouds into a clear, bright sunlit sky. That light is extraordinary!

On reflection, I have been so self preoccupied in these past few months that my back has, at times, been turned away from the sun (*the Son!*) and all I have focused on has been my shadow! Not the real ME! Yet that shining light and source of life and love has continued to shine on me nevertheless.

When I visited my brother in Queensland recently, his wife left a small box on the bedside table for me, with the word "Happiness" printed on the lid in bright letters. Inside the box were lots of small scrolls of paper, each containing a message of gratitude..."I am grateful for the sunshine", "I am grateful for those who love me", "I am grateful for"... etc etc. We've put it on the table of each home we've visited and taken out a little scroll each day. Each one is like "a little ray of sunshine" in my day.

There have been many times when God's light has surprised me on an otherwise "overcast" day. I may have "dropped the ball" but God hasn't. God's love has remained steadfast. And I AM GRATEFUL.

↘A man's heart plans his steps but the Lord

GUIDES HIS WAY

(Proverbs 16:9)

CURSILLISTA PRAYER BEFORE THIS UNEXPECTED STORM – COVID 19

(OMCC Bulletin July – August 2020)

Our Father who are in heaven, I thank you for having been chosen and called to your service in the Cursillos (of) in Christianity Movement and for the help you offer me in this mission, in which despite my limitations you trust in my humble service. You, who are the God of tenderness and always celebrate a party when a child returns home, help me in this unexpected storm that has me fearful, scared, helpless and at the mercy of confusion and helplessness. I tell you from my heart: here I am Lord to do your will. I feel weak and fragile without you, but you who are the God of closeness and proximity listen to my plea to grow with you through prayer. With this confidence, I know that you will save me because You are the Captain of this ship, of my ship called life, but my little faith can make me fall into confusion and fear. Have mercy on me. You call those of us who are thirsty to drink. Help me to know how to communicate to the world your love, with which You love us with so much tenderness and so much mercy. Renew in me my first love for you and my commitment to the Church and the Cursillos in Christianity Movement. Help me to bear witness to the Christian life and that Your voice be heard to offer hope in the face of this storm. Holy Spirit and our Mother Mary: encourage me to a new impulse and renewed enthusiasm to evangelize in environments and people, especially those who are far away. I ask you for Pope Francis, for (the) priests, for those who have passed away, for those who suffer from hunger, loneliness, sadness, physical and emotional illness, for the leaders of each nation, for the authorities, the unemployed, for the doctors and hospital staff, who as true servants, are the army of science that is working to save lives. As Pope Francis said: "Now, while we are in rough seas," Wake up, Lord we beg you "and you answer us Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith? Lord, you are addressing us with a call, a call to faith ... »(Jl 2,12). As a disciple I remain in You Lord, give me courage and hope. Listen to my prayer. Amen.

De colores !

Pray an Our Father and Hail Mary.



A letter from a Friend

I just had to write to tell you how much I love you and care about you. Yesterday I saw you walking and laughing with your friends. I hoped that soon you'd want me to walk along with you too so I painted you a sunset to close your day and whispered a cool breeze to refresh you. I waited - you never called - I just kept loving you.

As I watched you fall asleep last night, I wanted so much to touch you. I spilled moonlight on your face - trickling down your cheeks as so many tears have. You didn't even think of me. I wanted so much to comfort you. The next day I exploded a brilliant sunrise into a glorious morning for you but you woke up late and you rushed off. My sky became cloudy and my tears were the rain.

I love you. Oh if you'd only listen. I really love you. I try to say it in the quiet of the green meadows and in the blue sky. The wind whispers my love throughout the treetops and falls into the vibrant colours of the flowers. I shout it to you in the thunder of the great waterfalls and compose love songs for the birds to sing to you. I warm you with the clothing of my sunshine and perfume the air with nature's sweet scent. My love for you is deeper than any ocean and greater than any need in your heart. If you'd only realise how much I care.

My Father sends His love. I want you to meet Him - He cares too. Fathers are just that way. So please call on me soon. No matter how long it takes, I'll wait - because I love you.

Your Friend Jesus