



APG Newsletter

Make a friend,
Be a friend,
Bring a friend to Christ

● SEPTEMBER 2024 ●

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YEAR OF PRAYER
2024

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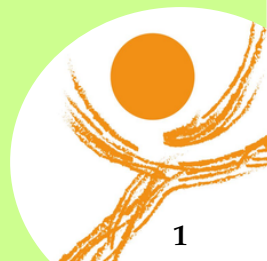
PALANCA OFFERING

Send emails of prayers and sacrifices for the success of the upcoming activities in APG Member Countries.

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CURSILLO UPCOMING EVENTS

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OUR LADY OF LA-VANG, LEGEND OF A PERSECUTED CHURCH

by Fr. Paul Van Nguyen

According to the historical records, Catholicism in Vietnam was mentioned in the nineteenth century. One of the key records was the book of history named “Khâm Định Việt Sử Thông Giám Cương Mục.” This book was written during the reign of King Tu Duc (in 1856), in which one crucial decree was issued to ban the practice of Catholicism in 1663. The book also mentioned that, in the year 1533, during the reign of King Le Trang Tong, there was a missionary named Ignatius, who secretly preached Catholicism around Ninh Cuong and Quan Anh villages in Nam Chan district (presently, this area belongs to Nam Định province and the diocese of Bui Chu).

The Gospel was preached in Vietnam before 1533. There must have been more than one missionary, and they might have traveled to many parts of the country during that historical year. These evangelizers came from several European countries and, sometimes, via our neighboring countries such as the Philippines, Malacca region, Macao, Japan, etc. Their companionship usually was the European merchants. They religiously belonged to a variety of congregations, such as the Society of Jesus (SJ), the Order of Preachers (OP), the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), and the Foreign Missionary Society of Paris (MEP)

Lavang of old was an isolated region with many dangerous wild animals. It also had a particular type of tree named “Lá Văng” (Văng leaf). The area is about 3 miles southwest of Dinh Cat Station (currently, the City of Quang Tri) and some 36 miles north of Hue City. According to the historical book of a village named Co Vuu, which was established since the Le’s Dynasty and during the reign of King Gia Long, the founding king of the Nguyen’s Dynasty in 1802, Co Vuu belonged to a newfound Ward named La Vang.

According to a historical document of the Archdiocese of Hue, on August 17, 1798, King Canh Thinh, son of King Quang Trung, issued a decree to forbid the practicing of Catholicism from Phu Xuan (Hue) northward, the Catholic Church must be stopped, her churches must be destroyed, and her clergy must be arrested and prosecuted. To avoid the persecution, the faithful of Tri Buu parish, in the village of Co Vuu, and other parishes in the region escaped to the isolated area of La-vang Ward.

This was a desolate place; people had to endure harsh living conditions, without adequate food and illnesses and were constantly in fear of wild animals and being arrested. They placed their lives in the hands of God and the consolation of the Blessed Mother. The gathering area for their communal prayers, encouragement, and support of one another was under a banyan tree.



Then, one evening, a beautiful lady with a child suddenly appeared in front of everyone’s eyes. They immediately realized it was the Blessed Virgin Mother and the Child Jesus; two angels held the vigil lights to escort them. The Blessed Mother reassured and consoled them; she told them to pick the Vang leaves to drink them as they would prepare their tea, and their sicknesses would be cured. The Blessed Mother also told them that their prayers would be granted to whoever came to pray at that place. She continued to appear to them several more times.

Four years later, King Gia Long had defeated all his enemies and became the first Emperor of the Nguyen Dynasty (1802–1945.) Things were calm down for the time being. The extraordinary story of the apparition of the Blessed Mother had spread out to all parishes in the entire region. Unfortunately, Gia Long’s descendants renewed the Catholic persecution, especially kings Minh Mang (1820–40), Thieu Tri (1841–47), Tu Duc (1847–83), and all, until King Ham Nghi (1884–88) was put in exile by the French, who eventually colonized the whole Indochina. After decades of being persecuted, the number of the faithful who were killed was enormous, between 130,000 and 300,000 (according to a Holy See estimation.) Among those martyrs, 117 were worthy of sainthood. They were canonized by Saint Pope John Paul II in 1988, and yours truly was so honored to concelebrate that Holy Mass in front of Saint Peter Basilica (St. Peter Square.)

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OUR LADY OF LA-VANG.....

However, the Catholic persecution has continued, on and off, until this day. A few cases were the martyrs of Father Francis Truong Buu Diep (1944) in the Mekong Delta and Father Jean Idiart Alhor, MEP, (1948) in Sapa, Lao Cai. Another case was Father John Lasan Nguyen Van Vinh, general vicar of the Archdiocese of Hanoi, who died due to the hardship in prison in 1971.

According to the documents gathered by Bishop Ho Ngoc Can of the Diocese of Bui Chu, the persecution that took place in La-vang was described as follow:

"On September 7, 1885 (during the reign of King Ham Nghi), the Van Than people (a movement that supported the King against the occupation of the French) attacked, killed the Catholics and burnt down their houses at the parish (Tri Buu) in Co Vuu. The next day, they came to La-vang. However, the faithful here were able to escape to the deep jungle; the Van Than ransacked and robbed people's houses then set them all on fire except the church of the Blessed Mother. They did not burn the church down for fear of the "power" of the Lady. The next day, Sept. 9, a Van Than zealous named Tho, son of Mr. Meo, came to La-vang and set the church on fire. For an unknown reason, that evening, the Van Than came to Mr. Meo's house and burnt it to the ground, with Meo, Tho, and their entire family inside, killing them all.

"On Sept. 12, 1885, some La-vang parishioners returned to their village. Unfortunately, 30 of them were arrested by the Van Than and supposedly to be burnt alive. A man named Thoan requested that all of them be burnt on the foundation of their beloved church. Thoan and 29 fellow parishioners offered their lives to the Lord that evening. The rest of the parishioners continued to take refuge in the surrounding mountains, but as they looked down at their empty village, they saw the church area mysteriously lit by bright lights and the loud sound of people's prayers. The La-vang church was burnt down to the ground, but the altar and candle stands were remaining unscathed."

Since 1901, there has been a three-day celebration on the feast of the Assumption once every three years to honor Our Lady of La-vang. Efforts to rebuild the basilica have started since 2011.

De Colores!

SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

by Fr. Paul Van Nguyen

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE WORLD ULTREYA AND APG ENCOUNTER WITH LOVE AND PRAYER

OMCC World Ultreya has been set for early June 2025, within the context of the Holy Year of the Universal Church. In October of the same year, we will have the APG Encounter in the Philippines. What a year for us Cursillistas in the Asia Pacific (and Australia) Group.

Let's look beyond the physical facts of what would be simply a visit or revisit to Vatican City for some of us.

First, it's a pilgrimage! It's a spiritual journey that will inspire and motivate us all! Besides, as pilgrims, we will carry our friends' and relatives' prayers to the Lord as they cannot journey. We will be there on their behalf.

Secondly, we will make the trip with a special mission: together with Cursillistas from all over the world, we will beseech our Eternal Father for a future Cursillo Movement that functions according to His will, not ours.

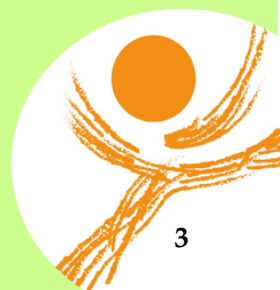
Thirdly, we will participate in Group Reunions at the global level ("Reunion of Group Reunions" I would term it a "Super Ultreya"), where "groups of Christian friends who come together to be better friends and better Christians." (F.I.3 #278)

Fourthly, we will reconfirm the purpose of the Cursillo Movement: "To create evangelizing groups for sharing the experience of what is fundamental to being Christian and from which the leavening of environments takes place." (#279)

Finally, we will return with new inspiration and motivation that affects our brothers and sisters Cursillistas at home.

This enthusiastic spirit will definitely extend to our APG Encounter in October 2025 in the Philippines.

De Colores!



APG AS A POTENT FORCE IN EVANGELIZING THE ASIAN REGION

by *Conrado P. Dixon*

Dear Brothers and Sister in Christ,

In our 20th National Encounter last June 03, 2018, in San Simon, Pampanga, our main speaker Archbishop Most Rev. Florentino E. Lavarias, D.D., Archbishop of Pampanga said **"think of the bigger picture"**.

As I had mentioned in our June 14 APG Executive meeting, we are in line with the OMCC, we APG should be a Synodal Church as Pope Francis would like the church to journey on.

The following transpired in our June 14 APG Executive meeting;

My instinct that the last week of October should be the 23rd APG Encounter changed. After analyzing and contemplating, I realized that October 27-30 would be very difficult for all of us, as we are all Catholic and observing All Saints and All Souls Days. So, my suggestion is the first week of November, as we cannot do it before the Jubilee Year. We, the APG, should be aware that we are a potent force. The member countries should realize that we could help evangelize the Asian region. That is why the theme of the APG 23rd Encounter should be "Cursillo, a tool of evangelization in the Asian Region," as I mentioned in our think tank meeting. Our speaker would be the president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC), the Vice-President of the FABC, and the keynote speaker would be the OMCC Spiritual Advisor. This is the idea; the Spiritual Advisor would talk about how Cursillo can be an instrument for renewal and evangelization. The second

topic would be, if the president is available, Cursillo, a tool for evangelization; the vice-president is for renewal. So, it could help the church in Asia to know Cursillo as a help in the renewal and evangelization, similar to what is happening now in Vietnam. I feel the desire and experience of their leaders. Slowly Bro. Anton and Bro. Tai should realize what they are doing is really evangelizing the Vietnamese people.

Cursillistas are well-equipped and ready for the realization that we've been waiting for. The key is to understand that our actions are a means of spreading Christianity. The question we need to ask ourselves is: how can we evangelize the Asian Region? The answer lies in using Cursillo as a tool. We can start by joining forces and using Cursillo to spread Christianity in Asia, where, with the exception of the Philippines and East Timor, the Catholic religion is a minority. Our mission is clear: to spread Christianity. Let's focus on the approach and consider this as a good starting point for us. Cursillo should play a part in evangelization.

You can view the video recording of the June 14 APG Executive meeting so you can follow the flow of the conversation.

After the APG Executives and friends agreed that there will be a 23rd APG Encounter to be held in the Philippines, it was also discussed to invite all the member countries in the next APG Executive meeting for them to know what would their participation in this 23rd APG Encounter

Hoping and praying that this is the beginning of the APG to be a Synodal Church

De Colores!

PALANCA OFFERING

Please send your palancas to these local contact people, for offering prayers and sacrifices for their upcoming activities:

- **CM Vietnam**
Email: thinhpq@titaresearch.com.vn

Cursillo Leaders' Workshop 1

Cần Thơ Sept. 23-25, 2024

Xuân Lộc Oct. 2024

3-Day Cursillo for Female Saigon #32

Oct. 3-6, 2024

3-Day Cursillo for Male Saigon #33

Oct. 10-13, 2024

The Second National Encounter of 2024

November 20-21, 2024 at Bac Ninh Diocese (North of VN)

Secretariat Election for CM in Hanoi Diocese

- **Seoul Archdiocese Cursillo Activities**
Year 2024 second half (July to December)
Email: sjoanlee@gmail.com / cursillo@catholic.or.kr

Future planning three Cursillos

Men's 429th (September 26~29) – 37 registered

Women 419th (October 17~20)

Men's 430th (November 14~17)

Year 2025 Volunteers training sessions for

Men, women, youth group volunteers and incoming volunteers

A one-day training session November 2nd (Saturday) or November 3rd (Sunday)

Year 2025 Cursillo Presidents' training session

All Presidents who will lead the Cursillo three days and four nights

November 23rd (Saturday)



THE 21ST NATIONAL ENCOUNTER IN THE PHILIPPINES

by CM Philippines



The Philippine Cursillo Movement had its 21st National Encounter last July 18-21, 2024. It was held at the Carmelite Missionaries Center for Spirituality in Tagaytay City. It was attended by the cursillo leaders and priests from different cursillo secretariats in the country. The theme of the encounter centered on synodality. **"Paglalakbay ng kilusang kursilyo patungo kay Kristo"** (Journey of the Cursillo Movement towards Christ).

During the event, there were liturgical daily activities such as the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, various prayers like the Holy Rosary, Apostolic Hour, as well as the morning and evening prayers. The speakers included the Bishop of Imus, the national spiritual advisor Msgr. Bert Espenilla, the APG president Bro. Conrado Dizon, Rev. Fr. Jun Meneses and after each talk, a workshop was held.

It was a successful gathering blessed by the wonderful promptings of the Holy Spirit set in an atmosphere of spirituality, peace and joy.



CM AUSTRALIA

by Peter McMahon, President

The Australian National Cursillo Movement held their Annual General Meeting on the 7th and 8th September at the Good Sheperd Seminary, Homebush, Sydney. Twenty-three delegates came from Cairns, Brisbane, Newcastle/Maitland, Sydney, Caberra/Goulburn, Lismore, Wollongong and Perth Dioceses.

Saturday was spent hearing reports from each Diocese on their activities over the past year identifying problems they are facing, as well as those activities that are working well. Other issues of national importance such as palanca and the website were also discussed.

On Sunday morning, a workshop was held to look at the Promotion and Renewal of the Movement. The theme of the Workshop centered around Prayer, Study and Action asking each one of us to take time out to listen to what God's Spirit is saying to us. We were encouraged to take more time in listening to each other before moving into Study and Action.

The Meeting concluded with a formal commitment from each delegate to pray for the renewal and promotion of the Movement.

Each delegate was asked to take this message back to their Diocese to discuss with their Secretariat and School of Leaders.

The Diocesan responses will form the basis of our National Encounter to be held in Wollongong Diocese in September 2025.



PILGRIMS

by Tyler Castano, US Military Korea

Our time on the 2024 Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage was nothing short of a wonderful experience for both of us. Other than the immediate spiritual act of walking over 120 kilometers in order to reach the resting place of the Apostle, it was a pleasure to be able to meet and interact with other like-minded Catholic faithful from all over the world and come together during this pilgrimage in prayer, Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, and other exercises and activities during the journey.

This was all while being able to enjoy the breathtaking Galician countryside, and walking in the footsteps of centuries of pilgrims who came before us. That being said, the pilgrimage itself also exacted a physical toll on many of us, with the first 20 kilometers of the hike causing about half of our pilgrims to go into towns in search of knee braces and borrowing walking sticks, all part of the spiritual journey. By the end of the 5th day, as we walked into the courtyard of the Cathedral of Saint James basking in the Spanish sun, it was truly a beautiful moment to have accomplished such a task as our little pilgrimage, surrounded by new friends and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

ULTREYA!!!



Cursillo Upcoming Events

- **V Conversations of Cala Figuera in Mallorca, Spain**
October 24-27, 2024
- **Meeting of the OMCC with the Executive Committees of the International Groups**
June 02,03 & 04, 2025
- **World Ultreya in Rome**
June 06, 2025
- **Jubilee Movements and Associations of the Faithful**
June 07 & 08, 2025
- **APG Encounter in the Philippines**
November 10-14, 2025



The year 2025 is a GREAT JUBILAR YEAR, an event of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social importance in the life of the Church, as it has been for many centuries. On this occasion, it is celebrated with the motto "Pilgrims of Hope." In the words of Pope Francis in the Bull of Indiction, "hope constitutes the central message of the next Jubilee... May it be for everyone a moment of living and personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the "door" of salvation (cf. Jn 10:7,9); with Him, whom the Church has the mission to proclaim always, everywhere and to everyone as "our hope" (1 Tim 1:1).

To this end, many Jubilee activities are being prepared throughout the year in Rome, aimed at the various realities of the Church (priests, religious and laity, young and old...). Thus, all the Movements, associations of the faithful and new ecclesial communities, among them the Cursillos of Christianity Movement, have been summoned to celebrate together the Jubilee on June 7 and 8, 2025, coinciding with the feast of Pentecost.

Understanding that this Jubilee celebration can also be a moment of grace for our Movement, the OMCC has proposed a significant event in Rome on those dates, a multiple event, in which three very significant activities are articulated: the meeting of the OMCC with the Executive Committees of the International Groups, the first to be held with the new model of international coordination of the Cursillo Movement, on June 2, 3 and 4. A great World Ultreya of Cursillo Movement on June 6. And participation, as a Movement, in the joint program of the Jubilee for Movements, Association and New Communities on June 7-8, including an encounter with Pope Francis.

APG SERVICE COMMITTEE 2023-2027



Bro. Conrado P. Dizon
President, Philippines



Fr. Paul Tung Nguyen
Spiritual Advisor, Vietnam



Bro. Anthony Thinh Phan
Vice-President, Vietnam



Sis. Goreth C. Bendoy
Secretary, Philippines



Sis. Maria Anh Tran
Treasurer, Vietnam Diaspora



Bro. Alfred Bong
Int'l Rep. - Australia

IDE COLORES!

