



The Escarpment *Newsletter of the Wollongong Cursillo Movement*

Dear friends,



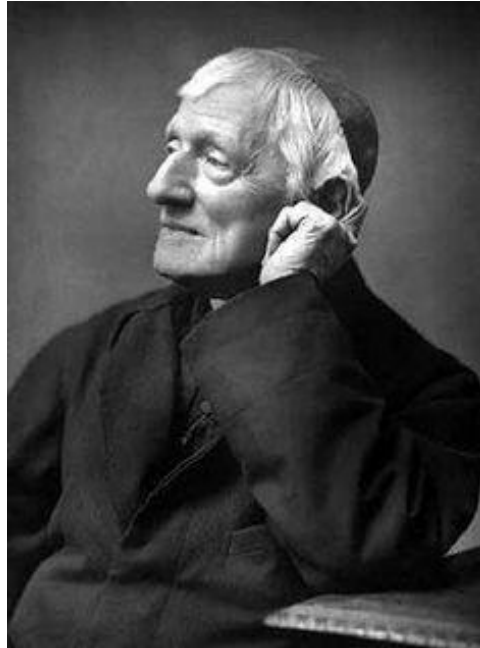
Lent is nearly upon us, and I wish to begin this issue with a word about *metanoia* and how it relates to the idea of conscience in the thought of Cardinal John Henry Newman. The diocese's Lenten booklet has the heading *Metanoia*, the etymology of which may be traced to the 16th century (the OED's [Oxford English Dictionary] earliest evidence of the word in English date from 1577, "in the writing of [the English poet and writer,] H. Peacham" [1578 – 1644]."¹ It was borrowed from the Greek *μετάνοια*.

Metanoia, literally "a change of mind," accompanies conscience in several areas – that of education, spiritual enrichment, and metacognition. John Henry Newman was among the greatest philosophers in the area of conscience. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI "(Newman's) whole life was one great commentary on conscience."² Newman felt compelled to put down his journey

¹ The Editors of the Oxford English Dictionary. "Metanoia"
https://www.oed.com/dictionary/metanoia_n?tab=factsheet&tl=true

² Joseph Ratzinger, 'Conscience and truth,' in *Values in a Time of Upheaval* (New York: Crossroad/Ignatius, 2006), 75-100.

apropos his change of mind though his who life due to a challenge laid down to him through a series of public accusations following his conversion from the Church of England. The resulting book was called *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* and conveyed his spiritual and personal history from age 15 onwards, during which he had several changes of mind, and, therefore, of heart, about matters spiritual.



Newman was to outline his views on conscience in 1870, in a letter to the Duke of Norfolk. In this letter, Newman draws on the work of the Church Fathers (Ss. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas), as well as appealing to the Fourth Lateran Council, to construct his argument. It was this exposure to the early Church Fathers while he was still part of the clergy of the Church of England, that caused Newman to rethink his relationship with the Catholic heritage of his church (then fiercely Evangelical and Cranmerian in nature), and align himself and the Oxford Movement with the designs of the Ritualists of Victorian England.

Without getting *too* technical, Newman presented a *personalist* view of conscience in opposition to the secular concept of the idea of conscience. Benedict XVI held the same view of conscience as Newman, a view that was concerned principally with the individual and their relationship with God. Newman's personalism is found in the way he contrasts theological intellect and the religious imagination.

Newman and Benedict oppose the Enlightenment rationalism which asserts the absolute power of reason “to achieve all knowledge worthy of the name”³, thus positing that “revealed religion is not a body of truth,”⁴ an idea which still, alas, persists in secular thought today. In our modern, globalised society, this personalism still has the potential to make an impact, even though the issues have changed. Some charisms have grown into international concerns (Cursillo, Opus Dei, and countless other various lay movements that have grown throughout the world as a result of Catholic Action in the 1940s), and the ethical and moral decisions big businesses make in regard to fossil fuel use, sustainability, and human affairs (aged care, charitable assistance, the decisions made by human resources departments on a daily basis) are more and more placed out into the open thanks to advanced science, the 24 hour news cycle, and news on demand on a global scale. We are beginning to realise our true power as God’s creatures to assist in some way in this new globalised society.



Earth from space (NASA: May 18th, 1969. Apollo 10)

Frank, my predecessor in this role, often commented about how affected he was by the 1969 moon landings. While having a cursory look through a book by the theologian and impeccably credentialed cultural commentator Jacob Phillips, with whom I held an all too brief conversation during a conference in Sydney last year (and who subsequently sent me a Facebook friend request) I alighted upon this paragraph while ruminating about what I would write in this editorial:

³ Mary K. Tillman. “The Personalist Epistemology of John Henry Newman” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association*. Vol. 60, 1986. 235.

⁴ Ibid.

“(Fritjof) Capra mentions the effect of seeing the first photovisual images of planet earth after the moon landings of 1969. He claims that this was hugely important for enabling a global consciousness to emerge, now people could see the oneness of their planet visually... This vantage point enables a vision of the ‘totality’, something mere mortals cannot see from the limited perspective of their tiny portion of it. This totality then transmits some spiritual gnosis which causes the Woodstock generation’s view of the world to take shape”⁵

I would contend that we have now, not just an awareness of what Jacob calls the ‘totality’ of Earth, but increasingly the means to do something substantial about it, by an appeal to conscience facilitated by our awareness of the totality of the world and the systems by which we are symbiotically and spiritually connected. We not only have the power of prayer at our side (which has always been ours, if we would but use it), but we also have the power to use our words in this connected world like never before, as anyone who has been blessed enough to have been asked to write and present a Rollo at a Cursillo weekend well knows. Christ is counting on us.

De colores.

Matthew Nicholson.

February, 2025.

P.S: I highly recommend this recent interview with Jacob –

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OG5tnR0q_h0

⁵ Jacob Phillips. *Obedience is Freedom*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2022. 54.

PALANCA

It is vital to recognise that without God we are nothing and we can do nothing. Therefore, we acknowledge the importance that Cursillo has given to Palanca. Palanca means the expectant Prayer and purposeful sacrifice which are offered to God. Palanca should accompany all apostolic action. The Spanish word “Palanca” means “Lever”. It came to be used to describe “Intendencia” (Prayer and Sacrifice”) because a lever enables a person to move something which is beyond normal strength. Palanca empowers the accomplishment of things which would not be possible without the Grace of God.

It must be genuine and offered by communities and individuals living in union with Christ and with each other. Palanca consists of any one or a combination of three elements which are offered for a particular phase of the Cursillo movement. The three elements are Prayers, Sacrifices and Works of Mercy. Palanca is the greatest contribution that the 4th day community can make to the Cursillo movement.

A Palanca letter is one that is sent to a whole group e.g. The team and candidates on a three-day weekend informing them that Palanca has been done and is in progress for the weekend. The letter itself is not Palanca. Colourful posters and banners are not Palanca though like the letter can be used as a means to record the Palanca process. Flowers edibles, friendship letters and good wishes are also not Palanca.

THE CLOSING

Attending the Clausura, the initial contact between the outside community and the new Cursillistas is also a powerful form of Palanca.

Extracts from the Handbook of the Australian Catholic Cursillo Movement.

MANANITA

The Mananita is the gift of Palanca in song from the wider Cursillo community to the candidates and team. The Mananita is sung at about 7am on the Sunday morning therefore the Palanca starts from the time the alarm goes off at 5.30 or 6am and participants drag themselves out of bed and drive to the venue to give this most precious gift to the ladies on the weekend.

I ask all our Cursillistas to become involved where they are able and to keep Praying for the upcoming three-day weekend commencing Thursday 6th march.

Contact person for the Palanca and Mananita at the venue is Barbara
barb69959@gmail.com

Palanca letters to be sent to Margaret at
wollongongcursillo@gmail.com

Denise



The Roman Missal “affords on Good Friday an almost perfect specimen of the old Roman *synaxis* of the second century, followed ... not by the eucharist, but by the fourth-century Syrian rite of the Veneration of the Cross and the second-century service for communion from the reserved sacrament.”⁶

⁶ Dom Gregory Dix. *The Shape of the Liturgy – New Edition* (T&T Clark: London), 2005. 36.



WOLLONGONG CURSILLO

REUNION GUIDELINES

NOTES

1. START: SIGN OF THE CROSS, prayer page 13

Always begin on time, if someone is late they should arrive quietly and just join in.

2. INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC OR SONG

4. A MINUTE OR TWO OF SILENCE, FOLLOWED BY INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Leader to begin the prayers remembering thanksgiving for community, priests, absent members sick and grieving . All pray in turn.

3. GOSPEL reading (Next Sunday's or appropriate meditation)

5. SHARING; How God has worked in our lives since we last met, incorporating our prayer, study and action. In short, our journey to God's Love.

Allow each member in turn to speak uninterrupted up to 5 minutes each. Listen lovingly. We cannot solve each other's problems, but we can listen!

6. CLOSING PRAYER BY LEADER AND /OR HYMN

Simple thanks

7. NEXT MEETING, LEADER, VENUE

Rotation of leader and venue (see notes below)

8. CUP OF TEA & BISCUIT, GENERAL DISCUSSION

ROTATION OF VENUE: is optional as it may suit the group to meet at one site instead of alternating homes, but this should be by consensus and discussion.

ROTATION OF LEADER: is most important to give each member an opportunity to grow as a leader as we are called to be leaders. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES OR BOOKS: we are reading or special needs for prayers or support in our Cursillo family, should be shared and this can be done during the 'cuppa' if there is not the appropriate time beforehand.

Ultreya 2025 Reminder:

Ultreya venues are subject to change depending on the parish involved.

Date	Time	Venue	Host Group
March 15	2pm	OLHC Rosemeadow	Campbelltown Ladies
April 12	12pm	OLHC Rosemeadow	Secretariat Instructional Ultreya
May 17	2pm	Xavier Conference Room, Wollongong	Wollongong Ladies
June 21	11am	Heritage Hall, Camden	25 th Anniversary

Subscriptions

Subscriptions are now due: Each family is asked to pay \$20 per year to offset the cost of Registration and Insurance.

25th Anniversary of Cursillo in Wollongong

21st June 2025

Fr. John Armstrong and Fr Chris Roberts will concelebrate Mass at Camden.
Lunch will be held in the Heritage Hall Camden.

A committee has been formed to organise the details for this event. If you wish to be involved, please contact Dianne Garland. dianne.garland@gmail.com

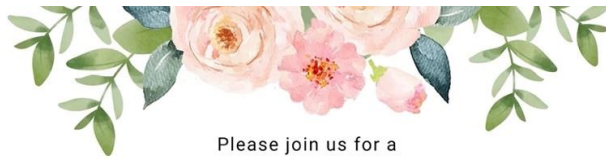
National Encounter

This event will be held from Friday 19th till Sunday 21st September 2025 at Carmel house, Varroville.

All our Cursillistas are invited to this event. Talks are being worked on and guests are expected from all dioceses in Australia. You can live in for the weekend or attend daily. Wollongong Cursillistas are encouraged to attend, help will be needed with transport from Minto railway station.

A reminder

The prayer vigil for the 2025 Ladies' weekend will be held at St John the Evangelist, Dapto, in the chapel following 5pm Mass on Tuesday the 25th of February. All are welcome. The vigil will be held within the context of the parish's regular Exposition.



Please join us for a

Luncheon

Monthly lunches continue on the last Friday of each month at Campbelltown Catholic club at 12 noon. The address of Campbelltown Catholic Club is 20/22 Camden Road, Campbelltown.

Words of wisdom from our Spiritual Advisor:

“One of the miracles we witness in Australia is the desert flowers that bloom following heavy rains that filter inland. This spectacular ray of life not only emerges from what appears to be a dead and barren landscape but also attracts many birds to the middle of the desert. They can sense life instead of blooming in the middle of a wilderness. There is a fresh sense of hope that not only delights the eye but lifts the spirit.

This new life almost occurs in contradiction to what we believe there is only death. It helps us to experience a renewal of life that engenders faith. These fruits help us imagine the earth witnessing a deeper life within. They cause us to discover how this new life bears witness to the creative power of God present in our world.

The beatitudes presented by Luke bear witness to how new life can bloom where there seem to be only tears, hunger and poverty. They help us to discover how, in our deepest human need, God can accompany us with a charity that is more than skin deep. This helps us to know that it is at times when we are most deeply challenged, or our resources are stretched to the limit that we can trust in a God who will not abandon us. At times when we are comfortable, we tend to rely on our resources and credit ourselves for our own success. It is not that we are called to welcome hard times but to discover how we need to sink the roots of our faith deep into the earth, anticipating the saving rains so that we are not overwhelmed.”

Reflection for Sunday, 16th February, 2025 – Fr John Armstrong.

Barbara – “Meditation: Footprints with a Twist”

Imagine you and the Lord Jesus walking down the road together. For much of the way, the Lord’s footprints go along steadily, consistently, rarely varying the pace, but your footprints are a disorganised stream of zigzags, starts, stops, turnarounds, circles, departures, and returns.

For much of the way, it seems to go on like this, but gradually your footprints come more in line with the Lord’s soon paralleling His consistently. You and Jesus are walking like true friends. This seems perfect, but then an interesting thing happens: your footprints, that once etched the sand next to Jesus’, are now walking precisely in His steps.

Inside His larger footprints are your smaller ones, safely; you and Jesus are becoming one. This continues for many miles but gradually you notice another change. The footprints inside the larger footprints seem to grow larger. Eventually they disappear altogether. There is only one set of footprints; they have become one.

This continues for a long time, but suddenly the second set of footprints is back. This time it seems even worse – zigzags all over the place! Stops. Starts. Deep gashes in the sand. A veritable mess of print.

You are amazed and shocked. Your dream ends.

Now you pray: “Lord, I understand the first scene with zigzags and fits. I was a new Christian; I was just learning. But you walked on through the storm and helped me learn to walk with you.” *That is correct* “...and when the smaller footprints were inside Yours, I was actually learning to walk in Your steps; I followed You closely” *Very good. You have understood everything so far* “...when the smaller footprints grew and filled Yours, I suppose that I was becoming like You in every way” *Precisely.*

“So, Lord, was there a regression or something? The footprints separated, and this time was worse than the first”. There was a pause, as the Lord answered with a smile in His Voice.

You didn’t know? That was when we danced.

REUNION GROUPS

LOCATION	CONTACT	MEETING
<i>Eagle Vale Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Pauline Ranger 0416497541	Time and place TBA
<i>Campbelltown Ladies – Night</i>	Contact Margaret French 0417041721	1 st Tuesday of the month 5.30pm in Campbelltown
<i>Camden Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Dianne Garland: 0418 640 373	2 nd and 4th Thursday of month 10am in Camden.
<i>Tahmoor Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Lesley Wyatt: 0488 666 326	1 st Mon of the Month 1.30pm in Tahmoor / Buxton
<i>Rosemeadow Men – Night</i>	Contact Frank Bugeja: 0415 562 808	Every 2 weeks at 6.30pm. Tuesday or Wednesday Rotating houses.
<i>Wollongong Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Elizabeth Gill 0403238602	4 th Friday of the month 10am
<i>Bossley Park ladies - Night</i>	Contact Denise D’Amore 0438254139	1 st Wednesday of each Month 7pm. Rotating houses
<i>Panania Ladies Group – Day</i>	Contact Trish Benn 0403897849	1 st Tuesday of each Month 11.30am at Panania