



APG NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2020

“Make a friend, be a friend, bring your friend to Christ”

Greetings Dear Friends,

As we come closer to the end of what has been a most difficult year, we pray that you are all safe and well. Uncertainty has been the word which springs to mind as we navigate our way through this period, but as we set our eyes firmly on the Lord, we have Hope that we will come through, with a new appreciation of the value of our faith in God and in our Cursillo community.

In this issue of the newsletter, we focus on Sri Lanka and we commend and thank them for the report on how they have managed to stay strong during this pandemic.

SPOTLIGHT ON SRI LANKA



Outreach Team to Trincomalee

HISTORY:

- First Cursillo 3 Days was held 16th-20th January 1964.in Kandy and since then the Movement has continued to spread to most of the 12 dioceses.
- There have been approximately 245 Cursillo weekends held in the various languages of English, Sinhala and Tamil.
- Leaders Workshops are held annually as is an Annual Convention to assist Cursillistas to review their commitment.
- Programs are conducted to introduce Seminarians to the Movement and they also conduct Retreat Days and Pilgrimages.

PRESENT:

- This year began with the successful 53rd Convention on 26 January in Colombo, with the theme “Called, Chosen, Sent to Proclaim Christ is Alive”. 276 cursillistas attended. The keynote address was given by Chief Guest, Cursillista Rt. Rev. Dr Cletus Perera, Bishop of Ratnapura. Other witness talks and sharing on the theme were presented, as well as Holy Eucharist, fellowship and the installation of the new Secretariat.
- An outreach team visited the Diocese of Trincomalee in February and conducted programs in four parishes with the intention of introducing the Movement to the Diocese. The response was encouraging. Two Cursillo weekends are planned in Sinhalese and Tamil languages.
- In March an Inter Diocesan Secretariat Meeting was held to evaluate the progress of different dioceses and the program for the coming year was planned.
- Some who have online access are conducting their Ultreyas on Zoom.
- On 15 June, after the lockdown was lifted, Leaders’ School was held with Holy Eucharist and sharing how participants came close to Jesus during that time.
- From March until June, during the Covid Lockdown period, a Day of Fasting and Prayer was held to intercede for all affected countries in the world and a WhatsApp group was formed to pray the Rosary around the clock for this intention. 160 Cursillistas pledged to pray and this commitment is continuing.



- Other activities included this Lenten



Day of Recollection in February.

FUTURE:

- Two Cursillo weekends are planned in Sinhalese and Tamil languages.

CONSULTATION

Thank you to all National Secretariats who responded to our request to provide an opinion on the OMCC Executive proposal to extend the terms of office for the OMCC, the International Groups and the National Secretariats due to the pandemic. We have conveyed the opinions of the APG countries to the OMCC President, which resulted in a unanimous view that these service structures should not be extended, but the normal rotation of coordinating countries should proceed on the previously agreed dates. This is in accordance with the OMCC Statutes. If there is any further information as a result of the OMCC Consultation with other International Groups, we will keep you advised.

We greatly appreciate all the communication received so promptly on this and other matters. We continue to grow into a regional Cursillo community, with the bonds of friendship and love becoming ever stronger. It is always a delight to receive your emails and to hear your news. We pray that this unity, within our diversity, will continue into the future and be blessed by the Spirit.

A MESSAGE FROM Fr JOHN

October is traditionally the month of the rosary in which we are called to reflect on how the mysteries of Jesus' life impact on our own. Through the regular rhythm over a week of practising the joyful, sorrowful, glorious and mysteries of light, we are called to enter into the life of Jesus through the pondering of Mary. This pondering spirit is being present to Jesus in a way which transforms these mysteries into a lived expression of God's love for the world. How we are introduced into this way of being present to God can transform our daily lives. So I thought it would be good to reflect on how we say this prayer.

In its initial form, it became a lay person's Office which mirrored the liturgy of the hours by praying the 150 psalms. The engagement with the mysteries over a weekly basis recognised how people often found it difficult in the midst of daily life to set aside regular times for prayer. The rhythmic method of prayer was to give people between 15 and 30 minutes, to ponder how the appreciation of the scriptural mysteries enabled people to encounter the person of Jesus in daily life. It sought to mix both the Lectio method of prayer which allowed seeds of God's word to be planted in our hearts, with the mystical silence engendered by a prayer which had elements of a mantra contained within it.

The Rosary while sometimes shared in common is actually a personal encounter with the pondering spirit of Mary which points to Jesus. In fact, it contains the three prayers that each Catholic should know by heart, Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. It is a school of prayer which engenders within us a receptive and contemplative heart which embodies the Creed. Yet it is the very familiarity of the prayers, which makes us pray this too quickly or which seeks to add additional prayers to allow us to feel that we are really praying! I am conscious that this prayer allows us to become present to God in a way which centres not on the person saying it, but on the person we are called to become present to.

Just as we set out on a Camino pilgrimage to meet with people who walk by our side, the Rosary lends itself to a walking path. We can say it in a way which embodies the prayer in our daily walk with Christ. Always trust that we encounter Jesus through the pondering love of Mary who draws us closer to her son.

¡DE COLORES!

Margaret, Fr John, Merran, John & Rhonda

**ASIA PACIFIC GROUP EXECUTIVE
CURSILLOS IN CHRISTIANITY**