



The Escarpment *Newsletter of the Wollongong Cursillo Movement*

Dear fellow pilgrims,

As you all know, the season of Lent has just begun, and I feel that this editorial should concentrate upon penance and fasting. Fasting was an essential discipline in the ancient world, and Israel wasn't the only nation to have the practice. All the early philosophers, thinkers, and healers advocated fasting for not only bodily health but spiritual health.

Paracelsus, the 16th Swiss physician, alchemist, lay theologian, and philosopher of the German Renaissance, and one of the Fathers of Western Medicine, recommended fasting, calling it "the physician within". Fasting and abstinence have been proven as not only having the capacity to bring bodily maladies to heel but also spiritual maladies and, in combination with prayer, restoring spiritual balance.

The book of Exodus records Moses "eating neither bread nor water" (Ex. 34: 28), Isaiah undertook fasts to "loose the band of wickedness" and to "undo heavy burdens" (Isa. 58:6). Acts 13:3 records the disciples fasting and praying before laying on of hands. The Imposition of Ashes symbolises the penitential spirit of the Lenten season, as do the formulas for Imposition of Ashes: "Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return", and "Repent, and believe in the Gospel". One is a *memento mori*, and the second formula is a reminder to repent of one's sins and do penance.

Now, this penance can consist either of a sacrificial offering (sacrifice of a daily meal or chocolate) or almsgiving. Taking up extra prayer in Lent is an excellent way to deepen our relationship with the Lord.

- Matthew Nicholson

Last Christmas, Cursillistas “took to the open seas” in the form of a river cruise on the Nepean Belle paddle wheeler, where good conversation and laughs were shared in a friendly atmosphere. Thanks to Choy for the photos.



The paddle wheeler The Nepean Belle, photo by Choy Sanchez. 9.12.2023, Cursillo Friend FB Group.

A raffle was held onboard, with a box of chocolates and an ice maker among the prizes.



Cursillistas sat down to lunch amid engaging conversation.



Ultreya Reminder:

The next Ultreya occurs on 16th March at Xavier House, in the grounds of St Francis Xavier Cathedral in Wollongong.



March 16th Wollongong Ladies at Xavier Centre, Wollongong

April 20th Tahmoor Ladies at St. Anthony's Church, Tahmoor

May 18th Campbelltown Ladies at OLHC Rosemeadow

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



Please join us for a

Luncheon

After a discussion at SOL about the importance of maintaining a connection with each other, It was decided to meet for lunch each month. The first of these lunches will be at the Campbelltown Catholic Club at midday on the last Friday of the month. The initial lunch will be on April 26th, as Good Friday falls on the last Friday in March. The address of Campbelltown Catholic Club is 20/22 Camden Road, Campbelltown.

From *A Limerickal Commentary on the Second Vatican Council*, by Hugh Somerville-Knapman, OSB:

“There was an old priest of Dunleary
Who stood on his head for the Kyrie:
When someone asked why,
He made the reply,
“It’s the latest liturgical theory”

A Witness Talk, given by Elizabeth Gill at the February Ultreya.

For a long time, I have asked myself, why am I here? Why have I lived longer than most of my family? What does God want me to do? What are His plans for me?

On 14th October 2016 at 4.35 pm I lost the heart of my life. I didn't realise this at the time, but one day I was asked who was at the heart of our relationship. I answered that I am the practical one so Phillip was the heart. It occurred to me then, that was why I felt so empty, so lost, I had no heart! The loving, the caring, and the thoughtfulness were gone; the balance was no longer there. I was alone; I had to make decisions without discussing what the best thing to do was. I knew he had often directed me when I was heading in the wrong direction as I often would act impulsively without thinking it through. Now, I was scared to do or say anything in case I was wrong; no one else would tell me that. I was angry with God for taking him and leaving me behind. What on earth was He thinking? Besides, we had done everything together, so why was I left behind? What did He want from me? What on earth could I do? Phillip was the one who everyone looked up to and went to when in need of any kind; he led our prayer groups, and all I did was the research.

I had no will to live I just wanted to die and be with him. I was told I had a family that wanted me. My reply was “ they would get on with their busy lives, it wouldn't take long for them to get on with living, they would miss me for a little time but it wouldn't effect their lives very much. It's not as if they often contact me and see me even less.” For a very long time, I kept asking God, why me? What did He want me to do? I believe that we are here to do His will, to live His plan, so what?

I had often thought of mission work and had said many years ago that if I was left on my own I wanted to go to Africa and look after aids babies. So I looked for and applied for mission work, but none occurred. I was not suitable for age or health reasons. Only one was offered and I couldn't do it because of my kids. It was in a dangerous and volatile region in Brazil, and that was unfair to my kids to put that worry and concern on them. Another looked promising, but war broke out there. Obviously, that wasn't His reason for me being here. It took a long time for me to work out!! Still looking for a reason, I searched in my mind, asking God, What is it? Why am I still here? When I mentioned it to friends, they said maybe it's just what you are doing. That didn't register as important. If I didn't serve Mass, read or administer Communion, someone else would. The Church would still go on.

Helping Phillip's family with their show/rodeo business is far out weighed by the benefits I receive. I still couldn't see a reason.

I stayed for 10 days with my cousin's wife who is on continuous oxygen to give him some respite, which I have been doing for the last 3 years, I have recently been helping some friends with problems they are dealing with and I was juggling time between two. One needing surgery and help before and after, at the same time another lost her daughter suddenly. I left one when she had someone with her for the weekend and went to the other. While still with her, I got a call to head to Armidale to my brother, who has Alzheimers as his wife is near breaking point and needed someone. So off to the train and there for 3 days with the intention of going back for a couple of weeks. I couldn't stay as I had to be back to read at the funeral and take the other one back for a repeat of her surgery as it hadn't worked. I am heading back to Armidale tomorrow.

This made me rethink! Maybe I am doing what He wants. I looked back on what I have done in the 7yrs and 4 months since I was left behind. One major thing is Cursillo. When I did my Cursillo weekend I was still very much grieving and the beautiful team that weekend nursed me through. I have joined groups, I have done weekends. I have given talks, at group, Ultreya, on weekends and at Masses to recruit. I have introduced others to Cursillo and led Lenten and Advent groups. I have helped my friend move house packing and unpacking twice. Maybe I am doing His work just in my everyday life and don't need to do anything else. Maybe its so that I can be there to call on when someone needs help. However, it would be good if it was one at a time. Another thing, and it is paramount, is that I have learnt to accept any changes in my plans as God's plan, which has given me peace. I no longer get upset if my plans don't work. I thank all my gifts, especially my Cursillo family, for bringing me to this realisation, and that is why I have told you all this. I value each and every one of you. You have given me my reason for still being here. I have found my heart!

De Colores

Elizabeth



Encyclopaedia Britannica online – Stations of the Cross, Christianity (History and Society)

Third Station of the Cross, carving in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Zagreb, Croatia

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Stations-of-the-Cross>

O Jesus, Who for love of me, didst bear Thy Cross to Calvary, in Thy sweet mercy,
grant to me to suffer and to die with Thee.

This prayer is familiar to most of us as the prayer that is said after each station of the Cross each Friday during Lent.

“In the early Christian church, the length of the Lenten celebration varied, but eventually it began 6 weeks (42 days) before Easter. This provided only 36 days of fasting (excluding Sundays). In the 7th century, 4 days were added before the first Sunday in Lent in order to establish 40 fasting days, in imitation of Jesus Christ’s fast in the desert.

It was the practice in Rome for penitents and grievous sinners to begin their period of public penance on the first day of Lent in preparation for their restoration to the sacrament of the Eucharist. They were sprinkled with ashes, dressed in sackcloth, and obliged to remain apart until they were reconciled with the Christian community on Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter. When these practices fell into disuse (8th–10th century), the beginning of the penitential season of Lent was symbolised by placing ashes on the heads of the entire congregation.”

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Ash Wednesday." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 14, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ash-Wednesday-Christian-holy-day>.

REUNION GROUPS

LOCATION	CONTACT	MEETING
<i>Eagle Vale Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Pauline Ranger	2 nd Wed of the month 2.30pm over Zoom
<i>Campbelltown Ladies – Night</i>	Contact Margaret French	TBA
<i>Camden Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Dianne Garland	2 nd and 4th Thursday of month
<i>Tahmoor Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Lesley Wyatt:	1 st Mon of the Month 1.30pm in Tahmoor / Buxton
<i>Rosemeadow Men – Night</i>	Contact Frank Bugeja	Every 2 weeks at 6.30pm. Tuesday or Wednesday Rotating houses.
<i>Wollongong Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Elizabeth Gill	4 th Friday of the month 10am
<i>Bossley Park ladies - Night</i>	Contact Denise D’Amore	1 st Wednesday of each Month 7pm. Rotating houses
<i>Panania Ladies Group – Day</i>	Contact Trish Benn	1 st Tuesday of each Month 11.30am at Panania