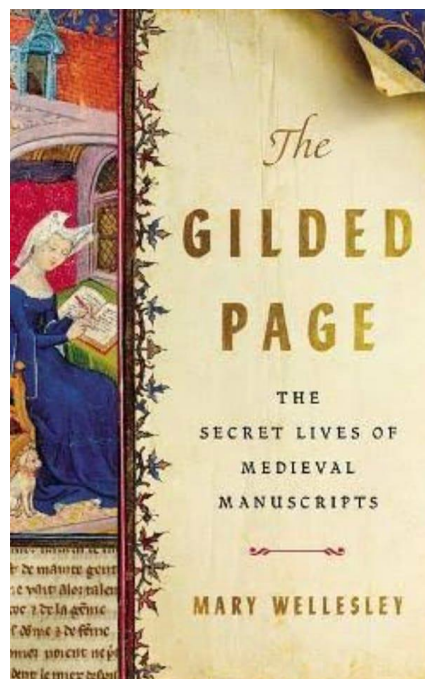




Dear fellow Cursillistas,

This editorial was suggested by a chapter of Dr Mary Wellesley's book *The Gilded Page – The Secret Lives of Medieval Manuscripts*, Basic Books, 2021. Anchorites/Anchoresses were usually lay men and women who took religious vows before spending the rest of their lives in anchorholds – the small cells that comprised their captivity – in prayer for the community. In the final chapter, entitled *Authors Hidden*, Wellesley describes some verse from the Exeter Book (circa 10th century AD), the book which is generally acknowledged to be one of the great works of the English Benedictine revival of the tenth century, and although the exact date of composition is unknown, scholars ascribe the dates to be between 960-990AD. UNESCO recognised the book as “the foundation volume of English literature, one of the world's principal cultural artifacts¹”, alongside the Bayeux tapestry, Magna Carta, and the Diary of Anne Frank.



¹Flood, Alison (22 June 2016). "Unesco lists Exeter Book among 'world's principal cultural artefacts'". The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jun/22/unesco-lists-exeter-book-among-worlds-principal-cultural-artefacts>

The section of *Authors Hidden* which piqued my interest, apart from the description of the manuscripts themselves which I found fascinating, was of the story of the visions that Julian of Norwich had while an anchoress, which she wrote in a work called *Revelations*. The first text (termed The Short Text) was written when she was so ill that a priest was called to administer *Extreme unction*. It seemed that everything around the Cross the priest held up while administering the Sacrament was “in hallucinogenic terror²”, in that she believed fervently that the Last Rites administered sanctifying Grace to “strengthen a sick person bodily and spiritually at death³”. Julian survived the illness, recovered completely on 13 May 1373, and was visited by the English mystic Margery Kempe around 1414, when Julian was in her 70s. The earliest known copy of a manuscript of this dated to the 1470’s (and acknowledges her as the author of the work), and the title “Revelations of Divine Love” was first used in 1670. The Long Text of this manuscript represents “her transition from visionary to learned theologian⁴”. She appears in popular culture, with the poet TS Eliot quoting Christ’s famous words to her “All manner of things shall be well”, in his poem *Little Gidding* in 1942⁵. She is venerated in both the Lutheran and Anglican traditions as well as in the Catholic tradition.

The existence of the anchorites/ anchoresses is only shown through bequests made to them in wills, extant manuscripts, and other references made to them by church records. In 1394, the will of the rector of St Michael Coslany, Norwich, made a bequest of 12 shillings to be paid to “Julian ankorite⁶”. While her writings were carefully preserved by the Catholic Church, the reformation made their publication in print impossible. The Long Text was first published by the Benedictines in 1670, and this was reissued in 1843 by George Hargreaves Parker. Thomas Edmund, a priest from Aylsham left Julian 12 pennies in his will of 1404, John Plumpton from Norwich gave 40 pennies in his will of 1415, and Isabell, Countess of Suffolk, left 20 shillings to “*Julian reclus a Norwich*”, in her will dated 26 September 1416.

One had to apply to one’s bishop to become an anchorite/ anchoress, for “divine approval for enclosure⁸” was the responsibility of the hierarchy, who were to assess the candidate’s suitability for such a life. Anchorites and anchoresses had to provide evidence of benefactors, Mary Wellesley states that “recent scholarly work⁹” shows that anchorites were supported “by almost every level of society¹⁰”.

² Mary Wellesley. 2021. *The Gilded Page – The Secret Lives of Medieval Manuscripts*. Basic Books: NY. 230

³ Dan Graves. “All Shall Be Well”, Christian History Institute.
https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/incontext/article/julian/?fbclid=IwAR34VIERi5xLLkdbT3UHxghMcOfAfnPpicns8AmP16bHbx_jjvnBfI6SM

⁴ Mary Wellesley. 2021. *The Gilded Page – The Secret Lives of Medieval Manuscripts*. 230.

⁵ <https://anglicanfocus.org.au/2020/05/01/julian-of-norwich-all-shall-be-well/>

⁶ Windeatt, Barry, ed. *Revelations of Divine Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. xiv.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Liz Herbert McAvoy. *Medieval Anchoritisms – Gender, Space, and the Solitary Life*. D.S Brewer: Suffolk, 2011. 45.

⁹ Mary Wellesley. 2021. *The Gilded Page – The Secret Lives of Medieval Manuscripts*. 221.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

There were numerous anchorites and anchoresses across Europe, and the practice was “a legacy of the Desert Fathers¹¹” who were the first to practice the “intentional isolation¹²” of oneself for greater union with God. The difference between the type of isolation practiced by the Desert Fathers and that of the anchorites of the Middle Ages was that the anchorites sought their isolation in populated areas. By the 14th and 15th centuries, the life of an anchoress was a popular form of isolation and had become popular.

Even today the anchoress has woven their way into contemporary culture, with mystery novels such as *The Anchoress of Shere*, by Paul Moorcraft, (2012), *The Anchoress of Chesterfield*, by Chris Nickson (2020), and *The Anchoress*, by Australian author Robyn Cadwallader are just a few titles that appear when one types the key word “anchoress” into Amazon Kindle. However, if you have found this editorial of interest, there is another book which addressed the anchoress as an historical figure, rather than a figure of fiction - Mulder-Bakker, Anneke B., and Myra Heerspink Scholz. *Lives of the Anchoresses: The Rise of the Urban Recluse in Medieval Europe*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.

De colores!

Matthew.

¹¹ Lucie Laumonier. “An Anchoress Burned at the Stake”. <https://www.medievalists.net/2022/07/anchoress-burnedstake/#:~:text=Towards%20the%20end%20of%20the,in%20prayer%20for%20the%20community>.

¹² Riley Winters. “Revealing the Recluse: The Sad and Secret Lives of Hermits”, <https://www.ancient-origins.net/history/revealing-recluse-sad-and-secret-lives-hermits-009047>

A PRAYER FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE

Heavenly Father, your son taught us:

“Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called children of God.”

In this time of great worry, we fervently Pray that your Holy Spirit sustain all the people of Ukraine to be vigilant and dedicated to peace and justice. Grant their leaders wisdom and prudence. Yet may they also have the strength and perseverance to defend their land from all adversity and foreign attacks. Help us all to live according to your Divine Will.

O God, our Father, in the days to come, we beseech you to comfort the suffering, heal the wounded, and accept the souls of the faithfully departed into your Heavenly Kingdom. We ask also that the most Holy Mother of God extend her blessed mantle of protection over our Ukraine. Amen.

Source: Ukrainian Catholic National Shrine of the Holy Family

The following notice appeared in Canberra’s newsletter *The Way and the Eagle* and includes an honourable mention of the Wollongong Men who assisted with the weekend held at Greenhills retreat centre.

Men’s Cursillo Weekend

The Men’s Cursillo was held at the Greenhills Retreat Centre on the Cotter Road. The bushland setting and weather were perfect for the weekend. We were joined on the weekend by men from Wollongong. Team and Candidates shared with each other friendship, prayers and the wisdom and blessings of the talks. Everyone involved gained so much on this weekend.

Many thanks to our wonderful team for their commitment, enthusiasm, spirituality and inexhaustible energy during the weekend: Fr Bernie Patterson (Spiritual Director), Alfred Bongi (Lay Director), Barry Johns, Gerry Santosuosso, Joe Jambor, Joseph Lai, Lester Smith, Michael de Raadt, Ralph Frank, Samir El- Sabagh, Tom King, Wilfred Egert.

We welcome our new cursillista brothers: Isaac de Raadt, Jason Garrick, Justin Hyland, Mike Mooney, Prakash Rebello, and Sandy Curcio.

Special thanks to Irma who helped with the preparation and serving of meals during the weekend, to all who contributed and to all who joined us at the Clausura.

The following meditation also appeared in the February edition of *The Way and the Eagle*, and it includes some practical steps to help us on our Fourth Day.

Meditation on Vulnerability and Letting Go

(Based on a meditation in Fresh Bread by Joyce Rupp osm)

Growth means change. Growth and life involves risk and being vulnerable. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came among us vulnerable, dependent and powerless. Jesus continued to be vulnerable even to death on the cross. Through His vulnerability He grew ever more deeply in love with the Father, drawing strength and trust and courage from that relationship. It was his deep vulnerability that encouraged Jesus to pray: “Let your will be done, not mine” (Luke 22:43) and “Into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

Enriching, loving and growing relationships require vulnerability. Being vulnerable comes freely from choosing to be open to loving in the manner in which Jesus loved. To be vulnerable we need to freely choose openness to others. Being vulnerable is not without risk - of being misunderstood, ridiculed, ignored, rejected and criticised.

Most importantly, to be vulnerable is to surrender ourselves to God. It is to allow God’s spirit to empower our lives. Growth is not possible without vulnerability and letting go. Most of us spend our lives denying, fighting, or refusing to accept what is being asked of us.

During this Lenten period let the falling autumn leaves speak to you of the need to let go. Ask yourself:

- are there things you no longer need and need to relinquish?
- what things and activities take up time and space in your life?
- what attitudes, thinking, fears, anxieties and worries do you need to surrender to experience greater inner peace, joy and freedom?
- what one step can you take to help you to let go and surrender (e.g. seeking the support of others, counselling, reconciliation)

Reprint of “Where are the Men?” (*The Escarpment, Journal of Wollongong Cursillo* 2(1), 2001) written by Edwin Galea.

A general trend exists in Catholic Men’s Cursillo. They stay away in droves! Why is this so? That seems to be the perennial question? Observing males in general, including boys in primary school, there is a certain consistency. It is not that males are not spiritual, but rather with that inner feeling of not being free to openly speak about it. It is certainly not that they do not have an opinion or do not know how to pray. Call it one of those unwritten rules “You keep it to yourself” or “it’s personal”. WHO SAYS?? Males learn male behaviour from the tribe. Fathers are not generally reputed to publicly speak of their beliefs or to be spiritual leaders at home. “Mum did that sort of stuff”, you can almost hear them saying. Whilst this may be an over generalisation there is nevertheless sufficient evidence to support it at least in part.

Then there is that other rule that says “thous halt not speak publicly about political or religion”. So going to a spiritual weekend where men discuss their spiritual faith is likely to be foreign. We have a cultural barrier to overcome. We can only do it with prayer and active recruitment for more men. The current ratio of women to men is in excess of 4:1. For this purpose we plan to organise a few prayer vigils to ask our God to break through this barrier. Without men we cannot grow this lay movement within the church. Earlier on I alluded to a bigger problem existing in the Catholic church. This could be because our church was traditionally blessed by a good number of ordained men and women. Evangelisation was abundantly present.

In contrast, elsewhere the multitude of Christian denominations often have elders and unordained men that preach or openly address the laity in their services. Anglican Cursillo and The Emmaus Walk movement appear to have less difficulty in recruitment. Let us pray and do what we can to correct this imbalance. Remember **Cursillo will not flourish without men.**

Thanks to Dianne and Ken for providing a copy of the original.

School of Leaders

This is a reminder that School of Leaders is held one and a half hours before each Ultreya, and all are welcome.

Ultreyas

Wollongong Ultreyas are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month from 2pm.

The next 2 Ultreyas will be held on the 20th of May and the 17th of June (refer to the table below).

Upcoming Ultreya's:

20 th May	Wollongong Ladies	Albion Park
17 th June	Campbelltown	Rosemeadow
15 th July	Reflection Team	St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong
19 th August	Eagle Vale Ladies	Zoom
16 th September	Bossley Park Ladies	St Clare's, Narellan
21 st Oct	Camden	Narellan
18 th Nov	Secretariat	Instructional, Kiama
9 th Dec	Secretariat	Camden or Narellan

From “Evangelization Through Conversion”, Eduardo Bonin and Francisco Forteza.
<https://www.natl-cursillo.org/eduardo-bonnin-aguilo/evangelization-through-conversion/>.

We were convinced then, as now, that the average man of today is very much aware of, and living fairly close to, the Gospel values, yet at the same time are, and consider themselves to be, far removed from Christ and any personal identification with Him. It is from this that our original conviction sprang, that if we could find the way to help each person identify in a personal, relational way with the Christ of the Gospel and the Gospel of Christ, this would be the key to allowing and motivating each person to attain their fullest potential.

When we started to champion our belief that our brief, yet intense, method could succeed in accomplishing this goal, or, at least, initiate the process, by making the candidate realize that what they were seeking was exactly what Christ was offering, the same old sceptics (usually the scholars from Sion and the leading lights of the world) used to tell us, as they still do, that we were “out-of-our-minds” if we thought that three days were enough to convert the distant ones.

Our only reply, then, as now, was to rely on two tactics. The first was to repeat what a Cursillista said on one of the early weekends in response to the same issue. “As if the Holy Spirit needed three days to work wonders. He has two days, twenty-three hours, fifty-nine minutes and fifty-nine seconds more than He needs, which is actually the time we need to become aware that He really is talking to us. This is the way in which the Gospel’s common sense became evident.” The second was to explain it evangelically, again with common sense, by quoting that brilliant expression of Guardini’s when he says, “A Christian is not something that you are but something you are becoming.”

Conversion, in fact, is not an EVENT that suddenly happens but rather a PROCESS that unfolds through a series of stages that comprise a SEARCHING, a MEETING and then a series of steps through which the “meeting” makes itself concrete resulting in everlasting and ever deepening PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS that in Cursillo we call PIETY, as it relates to our relationship with God, and FRIENDSHIP, as it relates to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Excerpt from the blessing of Mothers on Mother's Day:

For our mothers, who have given us life and love, that we may show them reverence and love, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, Hear our Prayer.

For mothers who have lost a child through death, that their faith may give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord, Hear our prayer.

For mothers who have died, that God may bring them into the joy of his kingdom, we pray to the Lord. R. Lord Hear our Prayer.

Loving God, as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children, so you watch over your Church. Bless these women, that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their sons and daughters, may honour them always with a spirit of profound respect.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer Source: *Book of Blessings* by Prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1989.

REUNION GROUPS

LOCATION	CONTACT	MEETING
<i>Eagle Vale Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Pauline Ranger	Time and place TBA
<i>Campbelltown Ladies – Night</i>	Contact Margaret French	1 st Tuesday of the month 5.30pm in Campbelltown
<i>Dapto Men’s -Night</i>	Contact Matthew Nicholson	Inactive TBA
<i>Camden Ladies - Day</i>	Contact Dianne Garland	2 nd and 4th Thursday of month 10am in Camden/Raby
<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 Lester Smith	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