



The Way and The Eagle August 2025

Cursillo Movement of the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn

From Alfred's desk

In the Gospel, Jesus calls His disciples not only to believe but to follow. He never invited anyone to sit back and admire from a distance. He called fishermen from their nets, tax collectors from their tables, and even the dead from their tombs. A Christian life is not a static possession; it is a journey, a mission, and a living response to the God who first loved us.

Yet there is a significant difference between knowing this truth and living it.

A laid-back Christian may sincerely believe in God, attend Mass, and keep the commandments, and yet live as if faith were a quiet corner of life rather than its beating heart. The laid-back Christian often keeps faith 'in reserve,' drawing on it only in times of trouble or when it fits neatly into the calendar.

This life may be comfortable, but it risks becoming like a lamp hidden under a basket (Mt 5:15). The graces God gives remain largely unused, and the joy of living as a disciple never reaches its fullness.

An active Christian, on the other hand, understands that baptism was not the end but the beginning. This is the life that says, 'Here I am, Lord, send me!' (Is 6:8) — not as a one-time declaration, but as a daily prayer.

An active Christian seeks opportunities to serve, to share the Good News, to bring light where there is darkness. This doesn't always mean great, public acts. More often, it means the steady witness of kindness, forgiveness, and courage in everyday life, in the workplace, the home, the parish, and in the streets.

Active Christians live in constant friendship with Christ. They meet Him in prayer, in Scripture, in the Eucharist, and then carry Him into the world, not by preaching alone, but by the way they love.

And it is urgent. Truly urgent.

The Greek philosopher Plato once recorded a story about his teacher, Socrates. A young man came to Socrates asking how he could gain wisdom. Socrates asked the man to meet him at a river the next morning. There, he invited the man to join him in the river. Socrates suddenly held the man's head under the water and kept it there. The man struggled desperately until finally

Socrates let him up. Gasping for air, the young man cried out in shock. Socrates said, 'When you desire wisdom as you have just desired air, then you will have it.'

The Christian life is much the same. If we desire God only casually, our faith remains weak and shallow. But if we seek Him with the same desperation as one who needs air to breathe, our lives will be transformed.

For us in the Cursillo Movement, this difference could not be more important. Our charism is not merely to gather with fellow Cursillistas and reminisce about a weekend long past. It is to be leaven in our environments, to transform them from within.

A laid-back Cursillista may look back fondly at their Cursillo and say, 'That was a beautiful experience.'

An active Cursillista says, 'That weekend changed me - and I am still living it today.'

Our Ultreya is not only a meeting; it is the cry of the pilgrim who refuses to stand still.

De Colores is not just a song; it is the witness of a heart that sees God's beauty in the world and wants to share it.

The world does not need more Christians in name only; it needs witnesses. Your active faith may be the only Gospel someone reads today. Your perseverance in prayer, your smile of encouragement, and your stand for truth. These may be the seeds God uses to change a life.

As Pope Francis reminds us, 'The Lord does not call us to be soloists, but to be part of a choir that is capable of singing in harmony' (February 2, 2021). That harmony comes when each of us moves from passive to active discipleship. When we stop waiting for someone else to do what God is asking of us.

I invite all of us to ask ourselves, 'Do I desire God as desperately as I desire air when my head is under water?'

Am I merely admiring Christ, or am I following Him?

Faith is not meant to be stored away like fine china for special occasions. It is meant to be lived, worn, tested, and shared.

So today, take a step, however small, from the belief that is perhaps passive and move into active discipleship. Join that parish ministry. Call that friend who has drifted away from the Church. Offer to pray for a co-worker who is struggling. Visit the Blessed Sacrament.

Let us be like Mary, mother of Jesus, who, without hesitation, responded with a 'yes.'

Let us, with similar conviction, say 'yes' whenever we feel prompted by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is counting on us!

And when you do, remember this is not extra credit in the Christian life. This is the Christian life.

De Colores! Ultreya!

Alfred

National Encounter

19 to 21 September 2025 Our National Encounter, Pilgrims of Hope, will be held at Carmel House, Varroville, NSW (2 and a half hours drive from Canberra). Our Australian English-speaking Movement will celebrate its 60th Anniversary supported by the Wollongong Diocese. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will be providing the Music and Liturgy and will coordinate with Wollongong regarding this. It will be a gathering of cursillistas from all over Australia and a special event for the English Cursillo in Australia. If anyone would like a registration form, please contact merranmartin@outlook.com . Places are limited so early registration is recommended.

A fund-raising raffle is being held in aid of the National Encounter with several \$50 gift vouchers as prizes. Tickets for \$5 are available from our Treasurer Joe acgcursillo@gmail.com .

Come and celebrate ...

Come alive to our Charism of Friendship ...

Bring Hope to the World where you live ...

**Celebrate 60 wonderful years of
English Cursillo in Australia**

See you at the Encounter – DE COLORES!



A Pilgrims Journey

The following is an excerpt from a witness talk from a team member's perspective given by Rose Lai at the Ultreya meeting on 26th July 2025.

I attended a Cursillo weekend as a candidate more than 20 years ago and was surprised when I was contacted and asked to be on team in a womens' Cursillo in April 2024. The team director told me she was having trouble finding team members, so I said yes. I thought my husband had dobbed me in, since he is very much involved in the Cursillo movement and has been on team many times throughout the years. But he said it wasn't him.

To be on team with a Cursillo group is a wonderful experience. We get to share the story of our lives and our faith in God with other people. But I initially found it hard to prepare my talk. At the first attempt, my talk was very long and disjointed, as I tried to cram in many ideas without sufficient aim or focus. This is during team preparation, so I got some good feedback from other team members. They told me to try again. So the night before I had to make my second

attempt, I decided to totally rewrite the talk. It was about 10 pm at night when I started and I finished at midnight with tears in my eyes. I was touched by what I wrote, and what I wrote flowed easily from beginning till end. I don't know how I did it.

To cut the story short, my talk was on the first afternoon of the Cursillo weekend and it went well. I was relieved that I managed to deliver it. In my talk, I referenced some passages from the New Testament - one about Jesus telling his disciples to feed the five thousand with two loaves and five fishes, the other about Jesus being the word which existed with God from the beginning. To my amazement, Father Mick, our spiritual director, also chose the same passages as scripture readings during the first two Masses which he conducted on the weekend. I later caught up with Father Mick and told him this. I remember he said, "Isn't the Holy Spirit working in wonderful ways?"

I think I now know why it was not hard when I prepared my talk the second time round. The Holy Spirit helped me write it and He wanted me to know that He did help me. I am so grateful for His kindness and love and the way He informed me of His presence in my life.

Links for your reflection

Below is a link to Fr. John's reflections for your reflection and Spiritual nourishment.

<https://walkingonthewayofjesuswithjohn.blogspot.com/?m=1>

Below is a link to Heartbeat produced by Heart Ministry for Women

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)

3 Minutes with God – by Monsignor Frank Bognanno

Will what I do during my lifetime make any difference? Maybe in the present, but what about years from now? Will the good fruit of love and justice I have borne really last? Jesus gave us the answer to that question: Yes! If our life is connected by faith, hope, and love, we will bear "fruit that will last" (John 15:16). So, you and I do what we discern to be God's will for us in each moment; we do our duties as best we can, and we do them as much as possible out of a motive of love for God and others. God not only guarantees good, nourishing fruit from our labors, but fruit that, by his power, will last and nourish others in the years ahead.

Enjoy these reflections on hope!



Have Hope

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, preserve in prayer.”—Romans 12:12

Why do those people with real, genuine faith seem to be people of peace, people with peace? Because faith in God’s unconditional love gives them hope. What is real hope? It’s trust that God is right there, close, involved in our lives. One of the saints wrote: “Faith brings what seems hopeless within our reach, then added, “The person of faith is not one who believes that God can do everything, but the one who believes that he or she can obtain everything from God.” The Bible reveals the absolute unconditional and irrevocable love God has for his children. This is shown in Christ who both died and rose again for us. St. Paul wrote: “He loved me, and gave himself for me.” Through faith our hearts hold on to that truth and find great trust in God. The more I believe in his love for me, the more I enjoy God’s presence. If you believe in God’s unconditional, personal love for you, then you believe you can obtain everything from God. That’s faith! Faith is the mother of hope, real hope, and from hope peace is born in the human soul.

Prayer: Lord, strengthen my hope in you. Amen.

Hope Brings Life

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”—Jeremiah 29:11

The brilliant French philosopher Gabriel Marcel wrote: “I almost think that hope is for the soul what breathing is for the living organism. Where hope is lacking, the soul dries up and withers.” Hope is a virtue that is critical for survival in life. We don’t last long without it. Without hope we die physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Living involves hope. In his book *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl observed other prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp. He noted that those who had hope in being rescued lived on. Those who gave up died. Be alive! Have hope in something real. And the most real thing is the presence and providential plan of God for you.

Prayer: Lord, help me to grow in belief of your presence and plan for me. Amen.

Love Breeds Hope

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."—John 15:12

We place some of our hope in other people—family members, friends, coworkers, or neighbors. That feeling of hope and expectation brightens our life. And others are also placing some of their hope, trust, or confidence in you and me. Usually we know, or at least sense, what they hope for from us: a listening ear, compassion, a smile, or something we can actually give them. Our response to fulfill their hope is one word: love. Yes, it is love that moves our mind and heart to answer the hope they place in us. And if we can't totally fulfill their hope, our love itself will fill the gaps. Love and pray for those who place some hope in you. They won't be disappointed because they will sense your love for them.

Prayer: Lord, inspire me to love so that you can inspire the hope others need. Amen.

The Anchor of Hope

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."—Hebrews 11:1

The writer of the Book of Psalms sums up his reason for hope in Psalm 56:9–11: "This I know, that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, ... in God I trust; I am not afraid." There you have it. The person who believes and trusts in God, in my observation, has far less fear because he or she senses God's presence, care, and protection. In the Scriptures, hope is visualized as an anchor. By hope we are anchored to Christ, so we don't go adrift. He comes to us spiritually to be our anchor amid the storms of life. Be open to him.

Prayer: Lord, it is so easy for me to drift. Be my anchor. Amen.



Rejoice in Hope

"Happy are they who make the Lord their trust."—Psalm 40:4

Hope is essential for survival. I knew a Catholic nun who was physically challenged. She told me that she had applied to seventeen religious orders, and the eighteenth accepted her application. She persevered. She had hope based on the call she felt from God. She survived the refusals. She had hope because she prayed to our loving Father in heaven. Prayer strengthens hope in God's hand when all else seems hopeless. She lived Psalm 71: "For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth. Upon you have I leaned from my birth." Like that nun, we should

persevere in prayer to our loving heavenly Father to reinforce our hope for the future. It's all in his loving hands.

In the Hebrew Scriptures the Jewish people were called the "People of Hope." Pick up the Jewish book of prayer, the Psalms, and meditate on the messages of hope found there. For example, "But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me. O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time on and forevermore" (Psalm 131:2–3). With prayer comes hope. With hope comes life!

Prayer: Father, help me to truly abandon with the greatest trust every moment of my life into your loving hands. Amen.

More Three Minutes with God

[Three Minutes with God: The Power of Prayer | Franciscan Media](#)

Reflecting on a 'living', anchoring hope

Bishop Paul Barker

I hope that Richmond wins the premiership this year, but I suspect that is a vain hope, indeed a hopeless hope. I hope that there is lasting peace and freedom in Myanmar, but I fear that may also be a vain hope. So often, "hope" is a weak word.

Yet Christian hope is "sure and certain" in the *Book of Common Prayer*, because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Christian hope is robust, confident and unfailing, because God is both powerful and faithful, keeping all his promises and anchoring them in Jesus' resurrection. I sense we need to recapture confidence in this sure and certain hope.

My favourite Bible verse is 1 Peter 1:3: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." As a teenager I still recall our minister preaching on this passage and my eyes being opened and heart being stirred by this glorious and certain hope.

It is a living hope, not a vain or uncertain hope, because Jesus truly rose. Death conquered, life triumphant, and the living Jesus is the first fruit for many to follow. So those who trust in him are born again to a new life, through a new birth, to this living and certain hope.

In Hebrews 6:19, the writer uses the striking image of an anchor for Christian hope, that through Jesus' resurrection, Jesus has anchored us in heaven. The robustness and security of Christian hope is clear.

There have been times in my life when I have doubted Christian faith and been tempted to abandon it. Can this really be true? Why bother being Christian? And each time I have come back to the bedrock of the resurrection of Jesus, and found myself happily anchored in this sure hope.

A Journey of Faith: My Pilgrimage to Medjugorje

In another part of this newsletter, I discussed the importance of living an active Christian life. However, this does not diminish the significance of prayer and a contemplative life. This realization was brought home to me during my recent pilgrimage to Medjugorje. From June 27 to July 4, 2025, I embarked on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje with members of the parishes of Sutri and Viterbo, two townships just outside of Rome, Italy. Our group consisted of 24 individuals, including the Parish Priest of Sutri.

Medjugorje, a village in Bosnia and Herzegovina, means 'between the mountains' because it is nestled at the base of two hills. One of these hills, known as 'Apparition Hill,' has become an unofficial site of Catholic pilgrimage since the Virgin Mary allegedly appeared there to six children on June 24, 1981. During a time of suffering under the heavy hand of communism, the authorities tried to repress and discount these sightings, viewing them as a direct threat to the then-Yugoslav regime. For instance, the government declared one of the children, Mirjana, an 'enemy of the state' when she was only 16 years old. Despite being tested by doctors and scientists from around the world, Mirjana was found to be perfectly normal. She humorously notes that she has it in writing that she is sane and asks how many of us can produce such a document for ourselves. The Catholic Church has also conducted its investigations. While it does not officially recognize the apparitions as supernatural, Pope Francis approved devotions linked to Medjugorje in August of last year.

For many years, people from around the world have been visiting Medjugorje, attesting to the transformative power of their experiences. Personally, I have become a convert to the rosary. Previously, I never felt the need or interest in praying the rosary, preferring to pray directly to God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. I now realize that this was an arrogant stance.

My conversion occurred while trekking up the rocky 'Apparition Hill.' Along the trail, there are 14 large bronze reliefs depicting the events of Jesus' crucifixion. Each of these Stations of the Cross includes an image of Mary, who was present at every event of Jesus's crucifixion. We stopped at each station to pray. At some point, I recalled the wedding feast at Cana, where a reluctant Jesus, prompted by his mother, performed his first miracle. Mary had told the servants to do whatever Jesus instructed.

This realization made me understand that the Virgin Mary constantly points to Jesus and is willing to intercede for us. The Virgin Mary of Medjugorje is also known as the Queen of Peace. Given the 56 wars around the globe last year, it seems appropriate to pray to Mary for peace. In her visions to the six children, the Virgin Mary often asks us to pray for world peace. Of the six children who had visions of the Virgin Mary in 1981, four continue to experience daily apparitions today. During my pilgrimage, I attended a gathering of three pilgrim groups who met with one of these seers, Mirjana. She spoke to us about her visions over the past 44 years, generously answering all our questions.

Listening to Mirjana, now married and a mother of two daughters, I was captivated by her love for the Virgin Mary. She deflected all praise, insisting she was merely a messenger and that our focus should be on Jesus, to whom Mary constantly directs us.

In the early days, one of the children asked Mary, during one of the visions, why she had chosen to appear in Medjugorje and not somewhere else. 'I have come because there are many true believers here,' she replied. 'I have come to convert and reconcile the whole world.' Another of the children asked, 'Why are you appearing to us? We are no better than others.' 'Because I need you the way you are,' she responded.

Medjugorje is served by a large church, the Church of St James, built by the Franciscans long before the apparitions. It can hold around 2,000 people. At the time, it seemed out of place in such a small village. No more than 400 families lived there. Yet, now it is sometimes insufficient to hold the pilgrims who attend. Masses run almost constantly, and in all languages. It is not unusual to see Masses being concelebrated by 12 or 20 priests. The outside altar can accommodate around 5,000 people, and masses are also held here. The evening adoration draws large crowds, even during the week, almost filling the whole area. It was such a stark contrast to the adorations I had experienced elsewhere. In peak times, the crowds inside and outside St James' Church can exceed the available space. Last year, the 35th Youthfest was celebrated in Medjugorje from August 1 to 6, 2024. On August 3, 2024, 10 bishops and almost 700 priests attended Mass with approximately 50,000 people from 80 countries attending. There is a certain uplift of the spirit when walking with, seeing, and being with so many people of faith, actively demonstrating their beliefs. Walking around with rosary beads in their hand was a natural thing to do.

I am grateful to have attended this pilgrimage. It was a moment where my immediate 'yes', when invited, was rewarded with significant spiritual growth. Unlike the Camino to Santiago de Compostela, which I often recommend undertaking alone, I was delighted to make this pilgrimage with a parish group. Sharing this journey with others made it even more rewarding.

De Colores
Alfred

One of the Stations of the Cross on the way up Apparition Hill.



Prayers for the Community

I ask for you to prayer for Cursillistas who are struggling with ill health and other challenges. I also ask for your continued prayers for the Cursillo Movement and our activities.



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Save the Dates

16 August - Canberra/Goulburn Spirituality Day followed by the AGM will be held at Belconnen South Parish. St Vincent's Orana Hall, from 9am to 1.30pm For those that may be interested, the Secretariat are listed on the [last page](#) of this newsletter. You are most welcome to contact anyone to discuss what the role involves or just for a friendly chat to catch up.

27 September – Ultreya to be hosted by the Gungahlin Men's Group

25 October – Ultreya to be hosted by the Tuggeranong Men's Group

National Dates of interest

November 2025 Cursillo Encounter of Asia Pacific Group in the Philippines will be held with representatives from Australia and many more from the other APG countries. Expressions of interest in attending and requests for further information can be sent to Anne Moloney at annemmoloney@gmail.com or phone 0416202106.



The next **'The Way and The Eagle'** will be in November 2025

If you would like to contribute, please email the editor in the first week of November.

Any contributions are appreciated, particularly news about members. It is always welcome, as nice to hear from friends from afar.

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