



The Way and The Eagle May 2025

Cursillo Movement of the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn

From Alfred's desk

Greetings to all.

Let me start with a short story.

In one of our bustling cities, there lived a young software engineer named Alex. Alex was passionate about technology and innovation, always striving to create solutions that could make people's lives easier. Alex remained optimistic and dedicated to his work despite the fast-paced environment and constant challenges.

One day, Alex's company faced a significant setback. A critical project was on the verge of failure, and the team was under immense pressure. Many colleagues began to lose hope, but Alex refused to give up. He believed that with perseverance and collaboration, they could turn things around.

Late one evening, Alex was working tirelessly at his desk when he noticed a new graduate recruit struggling with a complex task. Without hesitation, Alex offered to help. Together, they brainstormed ideas and found innovative solutions to the problem. The intern was grateful for Alex's guidance and support, and their confidence grew.

Inspired by Alex's determination, the team rallied together. They worked long hours, sharing knowledge and supporting each other. Slowly but surely, they made progress. Alex's positive attitude and willingness to help others had sparked a sense of unity and resilience within the team.

Finally, after weeks of hard work, the project was completed successfully. The company's leadership praised the team's efforts, and Alex was recognized for his exceptional contribution. The experience taught everyone that hope and collaboration could lead to remarkable achievements even in the face of adversity.

The moral of this story is that perseverance, teamwork, and a positive mindset can aid us in overcoming obstacles and accomplishing remarkable feats in our quick-paced environment. By supporting and encouraging one another, we can build a better future together.

As the Church joyfully celebrates its Jubilee in June, the journey toward synodality and the inspiring Jubilee motto 'Pilgrims of Hope' truly resonate with all of us. In Cursillo, we often express that 'Jesus and I are an overwhelming majority.' Together, we can achieve anything when we stand united!

Since our previous Way and the Eagle, Michael and Erica de Raadt successfully hosted another Cursillo Weekend in Galong, attracting 17 candidates. I would like to take this moment to welcome our new Cursillistas to their Fourth Day. It was a joy to hear them express their passion and gratitude during the Clausura. Clausuras consistently provide an uplifting experience, making them worthwhile events for the broader Cursillo community.

Since this was our first joint men's and women's Cursillo in the Archdiocese, I must admit I felt a little nervous. However, everything went wonderfully, and it turned out to be a great success! I express my heartfelt thanks to the team and Father Mick Mac Andrew for their dedicated service to the candidates and the Cursillo Movement.

I extend my congratulations to Cursillo's Vietnamese Diaspora for their Conference and AGM held in Canberra on April 21-22, 2025. I appreciate the invitation to partake in part of this event, enjoy a meal, and attend their concluding Mass. Our Archbishop Christopher Prowse was also in attendance, sharing his enduring ties with Vietnam and its community members. I truly value the connections established and wish our Vietnamese Diaspora sisters and brothers all the best in their endeavours.

This year, we're excited to commemorate 60 wonderful years of English-speaking Cursillo in Australia! To make this occasion extra special, a Cursillo National Encounter will be held at the Mt Carmel Retreat Centre from September 19 to 21, 2025. We warmly invite everyone who can come to join us at this gathering!

Regarding events overseas, a World Ultreya will take place in Rome on 6 June 2025, and an Asia Pacific Encounter is scheduled to be held in the Philippines from 10 to 14 November 2025. I will attend the World Ultreya with two other people from Australia and hope to join the APG Encounter in Manila.

It would mean a lot if you could keep these events in your thoughts and prayers. Thank you!

Finally, I warmly invite everyone to share their thoughts and feedback on anything related to Cursillo, whether it's in this newsletter or elsewhere. Your insights can truly help our Secretariat enhance the wonderful fruits of Cursillo for everyone involved.

De Colores
Alfred

Fr John's Message

As we mourn the passing of Pope Francis, we remember his deep love for the Cursillo Movement. I believe this is why he gathered representatives from each of the corners of the world to examine a form of governance that reflected how the spirit of God is proclaimed to every age and every nation. I think at the heart of this is the heart of the Cursillo Movement, that is to accompany each other in faith. In many ways Pope Francis modelled this in his pontificate where he lived the Charism of make a friend, be a friend and bring that friend to Christ. This was an evangelical love that saw Christ in each person, listened to their concerns and opened them to receive the Gospel with hearts set on fire. May we walk together in faith, hope and love. As we journey to Pentecost through these days of Easter, may we listen to Jesus who walks with us as we tell our stories and live our faith.

A reflection - A Pilgrims Journey

I was asked recently why I am still in Cursillo, given my first Cursillo was in 1977. The answer is simple, and found on page 2 of the Cursillo red book, the *Pilgrims Guide* 2012 edition:

"To be on a pilgrimage is to journey through Christ to the Father, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, with the help of Mary and all the saints, as you bring your brothers and sisters along with you."

This beautiful statement defines the meaning of life for me. I read it often to remind myself what my life is about, and not to get too distracted by the concerns of the world. It helps to keep me grounded.

I had the privilege in April of being part of the recent Cursillo at Galong, and it was a blessed, wonderful weekend and somewhat a milestone in the Canberra movement, as it was the first "mixed" Cursillo for candidates in Canberra. Over many Cursillos, I have never stopped being amazed at the profound impact Cursillo has in helping us all in our faith journey.

Cursillo is not the weekend, as delightful as that is. But rather, it is in the ongoing journey we hopefully have with our like-minded brothers and sisters in our pilgrimage of life. I am a great believer in small group identity. Belonging to a small group, operating within the framework of a larger identity, is critical. Why? Because we operate as part of the Body of Christ ministering to one another, and while God speaks to us in many ways, a powerful way is through each other, our faith filled brothers and sisters, people who are striving to connect with God as we all are. We depend on each other. I feel the key is to share our faith journey with friends; share the ups and the downs, the glorious mountains we ascend, and sometimes the dark moments when we wonder what is going on. Cursillo has provided a framework for this journey.

So, that's what keeps me in Cursillo. I love soaking up the spiritual understanding I receive in the talks and meditations and basking in the faith and love of the people I meet. I love being part of my men's group, where we have met as friends since about 1996 to share our faith. We never take our eyes off Jesus, and we pray, in humility, that we will always "see" Jesus on our pilgrimage to the Father. Hopefully, we can also bring others along with us.

De Colores
Barry

Links for your reflection

Below is a link to Fr. John's reflections for your enjoyment 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](#)

Spirit Filled

A spirit-filled Cursillo was held from 4 to 5 April 2025 at Galong. This was the first time a mixed Cursillo had been attempted within the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese, and reports from those involved indicated this mixing of genders, for all aspects other than table groups, was successful and allowed new ways of interacting. One early high point was the Reconciliation, which prepared all participants for Christ-filled encounters. All talks were delivered with great zeal, accompanied by joyous music and singing. Meal times and free-time periods were relaxing and encouraged interactions. Masses were holy and a special musical event occurred at the final Mass, thanks to our African Cursillistas. The Emmaus Walk strengthened the bonds between table-group members. There was a very enthusiastic response to the Cursillo program; at the Clausura, all new Cursillistas gladly shared their positive experience and the impact on their faith. The Clausura was reasonably well-attended including members from the Cursillo Community and family of new Cursillistas.

The Cursillo attracted 17 candidates (now new Cursillistas) including 10 women and 7 men, with more interested people who had to be turned away after the registration closing date. Participants included two seminarians who enlivened the group and shared the benefits of their learning. We welcome Jimmy, Karina, Jeanne, Celine, Anthony, Lukasz, Tanya, Faye, Hannah, Carolyn, Therry, Glen, Bea, Ben, Aden, Shade and Lawrence as new Cursillistas.

After a change of Lay Directors, Team formation was abbreviated, but by drawing on an experienced team, talks and the overall program were brought together successfully. We thank Kavee, Gerry, Ralph, Barry, Joseph, Jane, Rose, Tom, Wilfred, Arely and Joy. Kavee and Wilfred formed a great pair of Chas and led what could have been the most lively and entertaining Fiesta of all time. Jane stepped in to ensure a successful bookstall. Gerry drew together palanca from across the globe. Barry, Joseph, Rose, Tom and Arely lent vast experience to the weekend. Ralph was an excellent photographer. Special thanks to Joy for her willingness to join the Team at the last minute, after Amanda was needed by her family. A big gracious thank you to Fr Mick for his spiritual direction.

De Colores

Michael and Erica de Raadt



Cursillo team and participants



Majorca- the birthplace of Cursillo

I had the wonderful opportunity to visit Majorca in October 2024, making two delightful trips there!

The first was as part of Cursillo's global committee, the OMCC. According to the Vatican's revised Statutes for the OMCC, committee members must meet face-to-face at least once a year. We chose Majorca for our second gathering due to its deep significance to the Cursillo Movement.

The second invitation came from Eduardo Bonnin's friends, who invited me to attend the 'Fifth Conversations at Cala Figuera' held two weeks later. I was fortunate to be invited because a lovely Brisbane Cursillista, Margaret Morris, who couldn't attend herself, recommended me. Margaret, I genuinely thank you from the bottom of my heart! This wonderful event gathered Cursillistas from around the globe and offered a fantastic chance for me to connect with those I had only met on ZOOM. I truly cherish this opportunity, especially since Conversations at Cala Figuera are such rare gems, happening on average only about every six years, with the first one back in 1994.

Apart from a lot of work, I had the opportunity to explore some truly remarkable historical sights!

- The 'villa' in Cala Figuera, where the first Cursillo took place, is a charming little house now privately owned. While we couldn't explore the inside, it's interesting to note that back in 1944, it didn't have running water or cooking facilities. Kind neighbours prepared the meals during that first Cursillo, showcasing the community spirit. [See photo of the 'villa' as it looks now.]
- Sant Honorat holds a truly special place in our hearts, as it was the site of the very first Vatican-approved Cursillo in 1949. This is where the wonderful tradition of numbering Cursillo Weekends began! Although we've decided not to number our Cursillos here in this Archdiocese, I've noticed that some other areas embrace this practice. [See photo of San Horat's Chapel.]
- The resting place of Don Sebastian Gaya Riera, a remarkable co-founder of Cursillo, is found at beautiful Sant Honorat.
- We were excited to share the special Mass and celebration in Majorca's Cathedral marking the 80th anniversary of Cursillo! [See photo of Cursillo's 80th celebration.]
- Eduardo Bonnin founded our Movement. His grave is located at the Capuchin Church, a cherished spot he frequented during his lifetime. Visiting this site deeply moved me, as I thought about Eduardo's significant influence on our lives and his gift for leading people to a relationship with God. [See photo of OMCC next to Eduardo's grave site.]
- Eduardo's two-room apartment served as a cosy office where he explored his creativity, writing articles, giving talks, and creating books. It was also a welcoming space for visitors who wanted to share a conversation with him. Generously sharing his time, he dedicated himself entirely to his work. Though he never married, his compassion extended to those in need; he regularly visited the nearby prison to support the inmates there.
- Whenever Eduardo enjoyed a coffee with someone, he had a delightful habit of folding the empty sugar packet into a fun shape, which soon became his charming signature touch. As a sweet gesture, he would lovingly gift this little creation to the person he was chatting with. Today, his office proudly displays a jar filled with these treasured mementos from coffees shared long ago.
- Eduardo's office is a treasure trove of countless papers and articles he has penned, with books and folders adorning nearly every wall. The rest of the space is lively with photos, posters, cherished memories from Cursillo gatherings worldwide, alongside plaques, flags, and thoughtful gifts he has received. We learned that a wealth of additional materials is lovingly stored off-site in a warehouse, also to be explored.
- To assess Eduardo's suitability for canonisation, scrutineers are carefully reviewing all his writings, the talks he's delivered, and the books he's read and underlined. It is quite a monumental task! [See photo of Eduardo's office.]

It's quite a challenge to capture all the incredible insights I gained from my visits to Majorca and the delightful interactions with everyone I met in just one document! As I wrap up this

article, I want to share a beautiful takeaway from Conversations. Auxiliary Bishop Eusebio Elizondo from Seattle, USA, shared his heartfelt thoughts about God during the opening Mass. His words were so eloquent that I will not perfectly capture them, but I sincerely hope to convey a bit of his touching message to you.

Bishop Eusebio said that our God has three 'character flaws':

- Our God is persistent! He never gives up on us. He pursues us until we finally surrender to Him.
- Our God has no memory! He does not remember our sins. He accepts us here and now, as we are, not as we were.
- Our God has lousy taste! He chose us!

May God bless you all,

De Colores



Villa at Cala Figuera, in Majorca, where the first Cursillo was held in 1944.



Members of the OMCC next to the final resting place of Eduardo Bonnin.



Sant Honorat Chapel



Inside Eduardo's office.



80 year Mass Celebration & dancing after party



Prayers for the Community

I ask for you to prayer for Cursillistas who have recently departed. Pope Francis, Fr Michael Fallon MSC and Mary Moran from the Kippax Parish. I also ask for your continued prayers for the Cursillo Movement and our activities.



Save the Dates

24 May – Special Ultreya – Pontificate of Francis to be held at Orana Centre, St. Vincent’s Church Aranda.

16 August - Canberra/Goulburn Spirituality Day followed by the AGM will be held at St Monica’s Church Hall, venue to be confirmed For those that may be interested, the Secretariat are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

26 July – Ultreya to be hosted by the Belconnen women’s Group

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

6 June 2025 Cursillo World Ultreya in Rome, in association with the Church’s Jubilee Year, as well as gatherings of Ecclesial Movements. Alfred Bongi will be our representative.

12 – 15 June - The annual Diocese of Maitland- Newcastle 2025 Cursillo Retreat weekend will be held at Rathmines with the theme “Called to Be”

19 to 21 September 2025 Our National Encounter, Pilgrims of Hope, will be held at Carmel House, Varroville, NSW. 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.

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