



The Way and The Eagle November 2024

Cursillo Movement of the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn

Editor's Note

Welcome to the November 2024 issue. I am sending out an early edition so you can save the date for our Christmas Ultreya. I am still in Townsville enjoying the time with family and walking in the park that I played in as a child. As it gets closer to my time to return home to Canberra, I am looking forward to seeing my many friends I made in the community.

Hope you are enjoying the spring and getting much fresh air in the great outdoors.

A reflection - Community

I did my Cursillo in October 2024, Fr. Michael Fallon was the Spiritual Director and Marian Brunskill was the team leader. It was a bit of a challenge for me as I was not sure what was going to be expected of me. I was very happy to know that there were no expectations, just a desire to help me find my way on a new journey. I have made many friends within the Cursillo community and enjoy catching up with them but most important for me, is the way my focus is brought back to Jesus. I have grown a lot over the years and not just spiritually but emotionally also. I am also particularly grateful for ad hoc spirituality days, the community is a safe space for those that enjoy doing theology study and sharing with the community. Due to family commitments, I miss several months a year of Ultreyas and Reunions, coming back reinforces the Fourth Day principles of piety, study and action. Hearing how others are living their Fourth Day, reminds me that the small every day actions for others are important. We do not need to be missionaries making huge sacrifices to make a difference in the world. If someone was to ask me, 'Why Cursillo?', I would simply say. 'It enriches your life, enlarges your heart and the community offers much support.' I once asked a member to pray for my sister as I was concerned for her safety. Their immediate prayer was very powerful, as I discovered the results later that night. So I ask you, "What is Cursillo to you?"

De Colores

Amanda

An Invitation – Christmas Ultreya

INVITATION to Christmas Ultreya – Saturday 16 November 2024 comprising:

- 9.30 am Mass St Michael's Church, 2 Tyrrell Circuit, Kaleen
- 10.30 am Christmas Ultreya St Monica's Church Hall, cnr Moynihan St and Copland Drive. Evatt

Dear readers and Cursillista friends

You are invited to save the date and come to our Christmas Ultreya on Saturday 16 November as we celebrate our friendship and community as part of the Cursillo Movement.

The Christmas Ultreya will start with **Mass at 9.30am at St Michael's Church**, 2 Tyrrell Circuit Kaleen. We will be joining the Parish for Mass which will be celebrated by Fr Mick MacAndrew. What a wonderful opportunity to say thank you to God for his grace, blessings, and peace throughout the year. We have an opportunity to remember our shared community through Holy Communion.

Our celebration of **Christmas Ultreya** after Mass will then move to **St Monica's Church meeting room** cnr Moynihan St and Copland Drive. Evatt. The Ultreya will be hosted by the Belconnen Ladies Group Reunion.

We will conclude our Christmas Ultreya with a shared lunch. Please bring a plate to share. Tea and coffee will be available.

Invite a friend! Reach out to someone who may be undecided or reluctant to come and needs a personal invitation. Let us take the opportunity to be a friend to someone who may need some friendship (don't we all).

To help with arrangements we need to know numbers. Please advise Irma at acgcursillo@gmail.com of your interest and intention to come.

De colores



A Christmas Story

It had been a bad week. An important presentation I gave was poorly received and I wasn't achieving my performance targets. At short notice I was summoned to Head Office for an 'interview' which was code for a reprimand and possible dismissal. I was sure that I wasn't being invited to the staff Christmas party. As I packed and left home I was under a 'cloud.' The kids were noisy, irritable, and disruptive and my frazzled wife was none too pleased that I would be away for a couple of days leaving her to cope alone with all the Christmas preparations. Her icy look made it quite clear how she felt. To top things off as I left for the long drive to Head Office bad weather was setting in.

I had travelled some distance when it started to rain. The storm was making visibility almost impossible. Even with the wipers at the fastest speed and lights on high beam I struggled to see a metre or two in front of me. I felt tired and miserable. The prospect of driving another 250 kilometres in this storm did not appeal to me so I decided to wait it out in the next town I came to. The rain was getting heavier and water on the road was making driving treacherous. I slowed the car to a crawl. A sign ahead pointed to Curmudgeon. I turned off the highway and crept along a pot holed road, crossed a rickety bridge, and entered a small village. The servo, café, shops, and nearby houses were all in darkness. The only light I could see came from a small church on the hill. Parking the car, I hurried into the church seeking shelter. Inside there were three women sitting together in front of the altar. One of the women said: 'Good evening! Welcome! My name is Frida.'

'It's a good night for cats and dogs!' I replied. Frida said: 'Sit a while and wait for the storm to pass. Would you like a cup of tea?' 'Thanks that would be good' I said. As we sat Frida introduced the other two women with her, Bea, and Dodie. 'My name is Bronagh Sullivan' I said. 'That's an unusual name,' said Bea. 'Yes, it is. My name is Irish reflecting my Celtic ancestry.' I replied.

'Names can have a powerful influence.' said Dodie. Dodie explained that Frida's name is Scandinavian in origin meaning "peace", Bea's full name Beatrice comes from Beatrix, a Latin name meaning "she who brings happiness and joy." and her name, Dodie comes from the Hebrew name Dodavah meaning "love". Dodie said: 'This church and the thousands of churches in the world devoted to honouring and worshipping Jesus whose name is derived from Hebrew name Yehoshua which means "God saves."'

'I can do with some saving with all that's happened to me over the past few days.' I said. 'My life is all messed up.' Frida said: 'We're really good listeners. Why don't you take a while to tell us about it.' For some inexplicable reason, a lifetime of pent-up frustrations and disappointments came pouring out like the rain outside - of constantly trying to please others, seeking their approval and feeling unworthy and unappreciated. When I had finished baring my soul, I felt completely drained.

Dodie said: 'I sense a spirit of sorrow within you. Your name in fact comes from the Irish word 'bron,' meaning 'sorrow'. You need to be released from that negative spirit. Can we pray for you?' 'Yes please, if it will help' I said. The three women prayed for the cleansing and healing of my soul, through the life and blood of Jesus, and for the anointing of Holy Spirit to come onto me.

As they prayed over me, I sensed the loving embrace of God, the Father. I heard God saying in my heart: “You have always been my beloved child, and I have loved you from the very beginning of time.” I don’t remember how I left that church and when. All I can remember was the great gift of love, peace and joy that I received that day from Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.



The Catholic Thing - A Christmas Reflection

By Msgr. Robert J. Batule

At Midnight Mass all over the world, the words of the prophet Isaiah are proclaimed: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” (Is. 9:1) Ever since the summer solstice, we have been losing a little bit of light each day. The sun rises later in the morning and sets earlier in the evening. Some of us walk out the door in the morning into darkness and then return home in darkness. Our days are framed by darkness; there is always more of it in winter.

Our lives are also darkened, due to sin. With every lie, slander, false accusation, our lives are darkened a bit more. If we rationalize enough, we will no longer distinguish the light of grace from the darkness of our sins. Why is it that a great many of the sins we commit are sins of the tongue?

Speech is God’s way of drawing us into the folds of His love. In former times, the Letter to the Hebrews says, God spoke to us in partial and fragmentary ways. Now, in the Incarnation, the Lord has spoken to us through His Son. (cf. Heb. 1:1)

The Word became flesh and we saw His glory, the glory of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth. (Jn. 1:14) This is the way Saint John describes the birth of Christ. There is no stable, no manger, and no shepherds in the field. How do we know, then, if we are in the presence of something glorious? Well, if you have ever been to Rome, you know the glorious by the

fountains, the obelisks, etc. It's glorious that antiquity has been preserved and we can revel in it thousands of years later.

The glory of the Incarnation is revealed to us in the One Who speaks truthfully. Jesus speaks truthfully in His birth. But infants do not emerge from their mothers' wombs speaking; they come out crying.

Near the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus stands accused before Pontius Pilate. He is accused of being a king. In His own defense, Jesus says, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth." (Jn. 18:37)

After hearing Jesus' testimony, Pilate is satisfied. He orders that the inscription JESUS OF NAZARETH KING OF THE JEWS be placed on top of the Cross. (cf. Jn. 19:19) What we have is a King Who suffers and dies for the truth. More to the point, what we have is the embodiment of Truth suffering and dying. To the question then what good is truth if it results in suffering and death, we have this wonderful reply from Saint John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor*:

[Christ's] crucified flesh fully reveals the unbreakable bond between freedom and truth, just as his Resurrection from the dead is the supreme exaltation of the fruitfulness and saving power of a freedom lived out in truth. (87)

Among the first things babies are taught is how to speak. Initially, the words are badly formed, mispronounced, even unintelligible. After some practice, the words come more easily. Some of us actually become glib and clever phrasemakers – a kind of verbal gymnastics. We bend and shape our bodies in various ways; we do the same with our words. We stretch, pull, and manipulate them so that, often, their common meanings are no longer recognizable.

Jesus was born and came into the world to teach us how to speak truth. Not how to fast-talk our way out of trouble, not how to "spin" things. He doesn't teach us to dodge and equivocate.

Jesus teaches us that we should let our Yes mean Yes, and No mean No. (cf. Mt. 5:37) This does not rule out speaking prudently, tactfully, or diplomatically. It does mean, however, that we call things by their right names.

The power to name was given to Adam before the Fall. (cf. Gn. 2:19) After the Fall, Jesus, the New Adam, restores our capacity to name things properly. Those who revel in the Messiah's birth cannot fail a second time by accepting the myth that language never reveals things as they are.

Usually, adults teach babies how to talk. On Christmas, we permit a Baby to teach adults how to talk. He is the Babe of Bethlehem and upon his shoulder dominion rests. (cf. Is. 9:5)

In Greek mythology, Atlas is a god who supports the sky on his shoulders. Superhuman strength is needed to bear such a weight.

There is weighty responsibility when we open our mouths to speak. We decide if our words are going to reflect truth. Or if our words are going to mirror fashionable denials of what the natural law and revelation tell us are good for individuals and society.

Christmas can never be separated from a virgin who assented to God's plan and brought forth for us the Christ Whose birth, life, death and Resurrection open up for us the prospect of eternal life. Christmas holds words and their meanings together so that we don't divorce language from reality.

After proclaiming that He is the Bread come down from heaven, which causes some of the disciples to depart, Jesus asks the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave? (Jn 6: 67) Simon Peter speaks truth, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (Jn 6: 68)

Jesus possesses the words of eternal life because He is the Word, the Word made flesh. (cf. Jn 1:14) The Holy Eucharist changes darkness into light for each of us; falsehood gives way to truth and our words go silent before the only Word that matters: The Word through Whom the universe was made, the Savior sent to redeem us.

Let us listen attentively to the Lord's word and be ever more mindful of its power to make us children of God (cf. Jn 1:12) unto eternity.

Below for those who like to listen to Podcasts is a link to The Catholic Thing.

[Podcast Archives - The Catholic Thing](#)

Walking with Jesus

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

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



Safeguarding standards for the protection of vulnerable people

The Secretariat is seeking the assistance of anyone who has experience in the implementation of safeguarding policies and practices for the Catholic Cursillo Movement in the Archdiocese. Draft safeguarding policy statement, code of conduct and complaint handling policy have been prepared. We are looking for assistance from people with an interest and some expertise in this area to review and provide comments and recommendations on these drafts before being finalised, submitted to the Archdiocese and being posted on the national Cursillo website. The drafts will also inform the development of training arrangements and resources for cursillistas. Please contact Joe at irmandjoe@gmail.com if you can help.

National Secretariat Annual General meeting - September 2024

Delegates and representative from dioceses around the country attended the National Secretariat AGM together with members of the Executive to report on activities, initiatives and challenges of the Cursillo Movement in Australia. Some key observations and points arising from the AGM were:

- while not without its difficulties the Cursillo Movement has an important evangelisation role in the Catholic Church
- there has been great progress made in the development of the Cursillo website
- the Cursillo Movement is faced with many challenges including cost, attracting future candidates, participation by ageing cursillistas and the availability of clergy.
- much can be gained by working with the local Bishop in identifying how Cursillo can best serve the diocese.

The National President of the Cursillo Movement, Peter McMahon, said:

‘... there is a need for us to look at how we can take Cursillo forward ... I believe it is time that we, as the Australian Catholic Cursillo Movement, stop and look at all aspects of what we are trying to do in all our Dioceses.’

All delegates, Executive members and observers present committed themselves to work towards the goal of renewal. In his newsletter Peter asked delegates:

‘to seek commitment from Cursillistas in your Dioceses for the next 12 months particularly to help bring about the promotion and renewal of our Movement’.

Fr John Armstrong, the National Spiritual Advisor for the Cursillo Movement, pointed out that it is not “what needs to be done” that should be our initial focus but instead on “what we can be”.

Prayer and openness to the prompting and direction of the Holy Spirit is essential as we consider what initiatives we can take for renewal. We need to do this together and importantly be Christ centred. Please pray for the Cursillo Movement.

Below we have Fr. John Armstrong – Spiritual Advisor, Merran Martin – Secretary and Peter Mc Mahon (National President)



Group photo from National Secretariat AGM, check it out for locals.



Save the Dates

Saturday 26 October

Ultreya at 10am – 1pm, Marian Hall, St Matthew's Church, 12 Chewings Street, Page ACT

Saturday 16 November

Christmas Ultreya – 9.30 am Mass St Michael's Church, 2 Tyrrell Circuit, Kaleen

10.30 am Christmas Ultreya St Monica's Church Hall, cnr Moynihan St and Copland Drive. Evatt

April 2025

A Women's and Men's Cursillo will be run concurrently.

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.

October or November 2025 23rd Cursillo Encounter of Asia Pacific Group in the Philippines. Dates to be advised.

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

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

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

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