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## VIEW FROM THE WEATHERVANE

### Lay Director's Letter

I've really been struggling with writing this column this quarter. This is probably "take five" at least. I don't know why the writer's block really. The only thing I can figure is that I have so many different topics swimming around in my head, that I don't know where to start.

Then that got me to thinking, how many of us came home from our Cursillo weekends with so much energy and fire and wanting to do something, but didn't know where to start? So I thought I'd start with the "What you can do for us" speech.

Now I know that not everyone is called to Cursillo as their ministry, but there are still ways that you can support the ministry of Cursillo. The simplest is making a donation. The Cursillo movement in Colorado is self funded. That means we don't get any money from the diocese or anyone else. All of our income comes from ourselves.

The fees we charge for the weekends are designed to cover the cost of the weekend and put a little bit (about \$5/person) in the treasury. That really isn't much, if you think about it. Out of that \$5/person that the treasury brings in, we pay dues to the National Cursillo so that we can vote for our National Representative and receive support from the National Committee, and we print and distribute a publicity poster each year. After that, there's nothing left! So often I hear people say "Why don't we....," and "Wouldn't it be nice if we....," (you can fill in the blanks on all of those). But all those

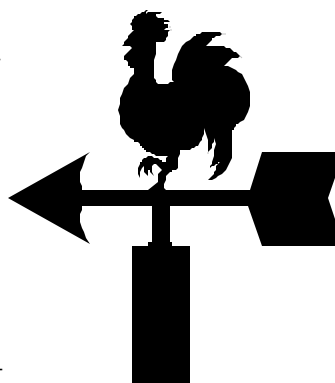
things cost money, and truthfully, we don't have any.

I was thinking the other day about how much money I spend on things like going out to lunch, when I have a perfectly good lunch sitting in the refrigerator. On average I spend about \$10 each time I go to lunch. How much would it hurt for me to just one time say "No, I'm not going" and then give that \$10 to the Cursillo ministry in Colorado? Now, I know what you're saying, "\$10? How's that going to help? That's nothing." Well, you're right. But what if we all gave up one \$10 lunch this year and gave that \$10 to the Cursillo ministry in Colorado? Before you know it we would have several thousand dollars!

Then we could really get down to business. We could do some of the "Why don't we..."s and the "Wouldn't it be nice if we..."s. We could provide scholarships to people

that haven't been able to be on a weekend team solely due to financial restraints. We could help sponsors that haven't been able to sponsor anyone solely due to financial restraints. We could hold workshops like Day of Deeper Understanding and Episcopal Cursillo Leader's Workshop. We could send representatives to the National Episcopal Cursillo Seminar.

Ok, I'll stop.... I'm starting to drool and it's not pretty. But just think about all the things you've wished we could do. And then ask



### Special points of interest:

- Ministry & Discernment
- Benedictine Spirituality (3rd in a Series)
- Pushups and Donuts
- NECC Annual Seminar Information

# CURSILLO #116

## Front Range Weekend Moves to Empire by Joe Owens

Springtime in the Rockies, and the thoughts of Cursillistas turn to... planning for the upcoming Cursillo weekends! That is certainly true of those of us planning the August weekend for the Front Range.

My wife Jane (who also happens to be your friendly neighborhood Crowing Times editor) and I are lay directors for Colorado Cursillo Weekend #116, which will be held August 25<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>.

*We testify that  
the Father has  
sent his Son to  
be the Savior  
of the world.*

This year, the Front Range weekend will take place at the Easter Seals Camp near Empire, where the mid-mountain weekends have been held the last three years. Jane and I, along

with our core team, have already visited the facility several times for our initial planning meetings, and we've been very impressed with both facilities and staff.

(By the way, a huge thank-you and "De Colores" to previous mid-mountain Cursillo teams for paving the way for us! The Easter Seals Camp staff is very knowledgeable on issues regarding Cursillo weekends, and your work on past weekends have made our planning that much easier!)

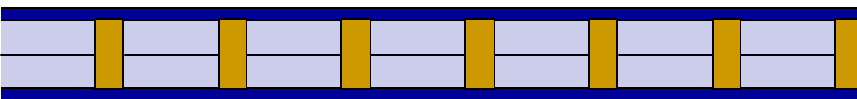
Jane and I are very blessed to have a fantastic core team for this year's weekend: assistant lay directors Rich and Nancy Hause from St. Bart's in Estes Park; head spiritual director "Father Mom" Gayle King from St. John's in Boulder; assistant SD Marilyn Schneider from St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Aurora; music director Linda Brown from St. John Chrysostum in Golden; head kitchen angel Becca Dooley from St. Martin's; head table facilitator Rebecca Towne from Good Shepherd in Centennial; and registrar Sue Richardson, also from St. Martin's.



The theme for the #116 weekend is "Testify to Love". We want to bring testimony of God's love to our candidates, and prepare them to "testify to love" after they come down the mountain! We have 35 team members already, and several paid candidates. Monthly team meetings will begin in late May.

We hope you'll consider sponsoring someone and/or volunteering for the #116 team! If you're interested, send an email to Jane and I at [Cursillo116@comcast.net](mailto:Cursillo116@comcast.net) - or, if you're "web-challenged" call us at 303-699-5855.

Ultreya!



# CURSILLO #115

by Tom Kenning

115 is off to a great start. Our theme is "Walk as Children of the Light" from Ephesians.

We have 29 team members representing six different western slope congregations. We have 18 candidates from five different churches.

Ed Nettleton is our Head Spiritual Director, Sharyn Bennet is our Head

Kitchen Angel, and Tammy Kenning is our Music Team Leader.

We have had all our team meetings and are ready to do God's work on the weekend at Lake City.,

*Walk as Children of  
the Light.*

**Can You Help?**

The Kairos #6 Team for the Denver Women's Correctional Facility is seeking team members for their December 1-4, 2005 weekend. Contact weekend rec-tora Liz Castillo at 303-989-0718 or email [elizabeth.castillo@comcast.net](mailto:elizabeth.castillo@comcast.net).

## NATIONAL NEWSNOTES

From the NECC quarterly meeting January 18-23,  
2005 St. Michael's, Norman, Diocese of Oklahoma

**Orientation for New NECC Members.** The first quarterly meeting of this year's NECC began with a day of orientation for the new members elected at the General Council meeting at Camp Allen in the Diocese of Texas on October 30. President Rick Burriss (Oklahoma) and President-elect Sharon Neukam (West Texas) welcomed the new members to St. Crispin's Camp and Conference center on Tuesday evening, January 18. The evening was spent with the group getting better acquainted. On Wednesday the new members received a day of instruction about their new ministries. Your new representatives are the Rev. Bob Dendtler (Atlanta), the Rev. Robert McBride (Dallas), Ronnie Barhite (Western NY), Ted Ederer (Olympia), and Martha Libby (Colorado). Martha was elected to a new term after completing the term of Marge Humphrey who resigned last year.

**NECC Meeting.** The continuing members of the committee arrived on Wednesday, January 19 and were transported to St. Crispin's. The new NECC spent Wednesday evening becoming acquainted by sharing what had been happening in their lives and discussing the study book for this meeting: *Ducking Spears, Dancing Madly* by Lewis Parks and Bruce Birch. The meeting formally began Thursday morning with the celebration of Holy Eucharist. The committee worked until lunch on Friday after which they packed up and were transported to Oklahoma City. They visited St. Paul's Cathedral where Dean George Back explained the extensive damage and subsequent repairs caused by the bombing in 1995. They toured the Diocesan offices and spent the rest of the afternoon visiting the bombing memorial. It was a moving and sobering time for the committee. They were transported to Norman for an evening of fine dining with their host families. The remainder of the meeting was held on Saturday at St. Michael's Church, closing with the celebration of Holy Eucharist presided over by The Rt. Rev. Robert Moody, Bishop of Oklahoma. Bishop Moody had graciously hosted the community at St. Crispin's for the first part of the meeting. Following Holy Communion the committee hosted an Ul-treya, which was followed by a pot luck supper provided by the Oklahoma Cursillo community.

**Speakers' Workshop Video to be Produced.** The committee agreed to reproduce 40 copies of the recently completed video workshop. As soon as these are available they will be on the web store ([www.episcopalcurso.org](http://www.episcopalcurso.org)) and will sell for \$50 per set. These will be a very useful tool for team training.



### Other Actions of the NECC

- The requirement that a Bishop endorse NECC candidates was reinstated.
- The Publications Subcommittee is seeking input from Diocesan leaders about the usefulness, desired changes, etc. regarding the Leaders Group Reunion Card.
- Other actions of Pub-Sub saw a continuing effort to revise the library; continuing work toward providing the *4th Day Magazine* via email; begin assembling a team of translators to provide the *Lay Talk Workbook* and the *4th Day Magazine* in Spanish.
- Actions of the Cursillo Leaders Development Subcommittee included continuing work in enhancing the web page; continuing work on revising the Exporting of the *Cursillo Method* booklet; and creating a training program for NECC members to help them in their important work of communication with the various diocesan movements.
- The Seminar Subcommittee continued working on the next seminar. They determined what the workshops would be and prepared a budget.

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# Ministry, Discernment, and Inviting

by Bernie Maly

Now that there are plenty of tasks to do and the opportunity and freedom to do them, let's talk for a moment about doing the work and inviting others into this piece of God's work. I'd like to share a few thoughts about ministry, discernment, and inviting. When we look at these ideas or actions, if we look at them rightly, they are over our heads. They are about God's work and His ways (and His ways are far beyond our ways), they involve supernatural guidance and supernatural power. They're over our heads. **We need to pray and we need to listen.**

We aren't doing God a favor by doing tasks to work toward furthering his work and His kingdom. God is doing us a favor by allowing us to work to further His kingdom and His purposes. The operative word is privilege. Privilege, privilege, privilege. God is God. He doesn't need my help or your help or anyone's help. He could accomplish anything He wants to accomplish instantaneously. His allowing us to enter into the processes of ministry, discernment, and inviting is indeed simply a privilege. And to know what to do and how to do it in this process we need divine guidance big time. **We need to pray and we need to listen.**

When we work for Christ, speak for Christ, or simply live our daily lives for Christ, our entire life and being are ministry. When we invite others to be involved, we are sharing an opportunity for them to do something special. The tasks are not special because of what the tasks are as such. The tasks are not special because of how hard we might work, how good we might feel about doing the tasks, or how good we might think we are for doing them. The tasks are special because of who God is and because he has a perfect plan for each of us in doing them, a perfect plan for each of our parish churches, a perfect plan for our diocesan cursillo movement. We need to identify and follow the plan. **We need to pray and we need to listen.**

God graciously allows us and assists us not only to discern what he wants each of us to do, but often to determine who else he wants us to invite into this ministry or into a deeper role in this ministry--and sometimes to suggest a task or role for them to consider. Again, he has perfect plans--and just the right people for us to invite in to help carry them out. We need to figure out what those plans are as well as we can. **We need to pray and we need to listen.**

It is about God allowing and using you or I to invite someone into Jesus' work that we feel led by Him to invite. It is not about arm-twisting or guilt trips. It is about trying to determine who the spirit of God is leading us to invite, and letting the spirit of God do His work. If a person does not feel led by the spirit of God to say yes to an invitation to participation or involvement, they really should say no. Occasionally I've begun to say to a person I'm asking about some involvement or role that no is as important as yes--that if we say yes to too many good things--and to good things that are not the one's God has appointed and anointed us for, we may likely dilute our ability to give ourselves fully to what God really has called us to be and to do. **We need to pray and we need to listen.**



## 2005 Cursillo Weekends

Team, Candidate & Sponsor Applications available at [cocursillo.org](http://cocursillo.org)

**May 12-15, 2005**

Camp Red Cloud  
Lake City, CO

*Tom Kenning, Leader*  
970-626-3869  
[tkenning@fnbdirect.com](mailto:tkenning@fnbdirect.com)

**August 25-28, 2005**

Easter Seals Camp  
Georgetown, CO

*Jane & Joe Owens, Leaders*  
303-699-5855  
[Cursillo116@comcast.net](mailto:Cursillo116@comcast.net)

**October 20-23, 2005**

Easter Seals Camp  
Georgetown, CO

*Jim Phillips, Leader*  
970-468-6346

# BARNYARD SPIRIT

## Pushups and Donuts

Author Unknown

There was a certain Professor of Religion named Dr. Christianson, a studious man who taught at a small college in the Western United States. Dr. Christianson taught the required survey course in Christianity at this particular institution. Every student was required to take this course his or her freshman year regardless of his or her major. Although Dr. Christianson tried hard to communicate the essence of the gospel in his class; he found that most of his students looked upon the course as nothing but required drudgery. Despite his best efforts, most students refused to take Christianity seriously.

This year Dr. Christianson had a special student named Steve. Steve was only a freshman, but was studying with the intent of going onto seminary for the ministry. Steve was popular, he was well liked, and he was an imposing physical specimen. He was now the starting center on the school football team, and was the best student in the professor's class. One day, Dr. Christianson asked Steve to stay after class so he could talk with him.

"How many push-ups can you do?" Steve said, "I do about 200 every night." "200? That's pretty good, Steve," Dr. Christianson said. "Do you think you could do 300?" Steve replied, "I don't know... I've never done 300 at a time." "Do you think you could?" again asked Dr. Christianson. "Well, I can try," said Steve. "Can you do 300 in sets of 10? I have a class project in mind and I need you to do about 300 push-ups in sets of ten for this to work. Can you do it? I need you to tell me you can do it," said the professor. Steve said, "Well... I think I can...yeah, I can do it." Dr. Christianson said, "Good! I need you to do this on Friday. Let me explain what I have in mind."

Friday came and Steve got to class early and sat in the front of the room. When class started, the professor pulled out a big box of donuts. No, these weren't the normal kinds of donuts, they were the extra fancy BIG kind, with cream centers and frosting swirls. Everyone was pretty excited it was Friday, the last class of the day, and they were going to get an early start on the weekend with a party in Dr. Christianson's class.

Dr. Christianson went to the first girl in the first row and asked, "Cynthia, do you want to have one of these donuts?" Cynthia said, "Yes." Dr. Christianson then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten push-ups so that Cynthia can have a donut?" "Sure." Steve jumped down from his desk to do a quick ten. Then Steve again sat in his desk. Dr. Christianson

put a donut on Cynthia's desk.

Dr. Christianson then went to Joe, the next person, and asked, "Joe, do you want a donut?" Joe said, "Yes." Dr. Christianson asked, "Steve would you do ten push-ups so Joe can have a donut?" Steve did ten push-ups, Joe got a donut. And so it went, down the first aisle, Steve did ten pushups for every person before they got their donut. Then he went down the second aisle, till Dr. Christianson came to Scott. Scott was on the basketball team, and in as good condition as Steve. He was very popular and never lacking for female companionship.

When the professor asked, "Scott do you want a donut?" Scott's reply was, "Well, can I do my own pushups?" Dr. Christianson said, "No, Steve has to do them." Then Scott said, "Well, I don't want one then." Dr. Christianson shrugged and then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so Scott can have a donut he doesn't want?" With perfect obedience Steve started to do ten pushups. Scott said, "HEY! I said I didn't want one!" Dr. Christianson said, "Look, this is my classroom, my class, my desks, and these are my donuts. Just leave it on the desk if you don't want it." And he put a donut on Scott's desk.

Now by this time, Steve had begun to slow down a little. He just stayed on the floor between sets because it took too much effort to be getting up and down. You could start to see a little perspiration coming out around his brow. Dr. Christianson started down the third row. Now the students were beginning to get a little angry. Dr. Christianson asked Jenny, "Jenny, do you want a donut?" Sternly, Jenny said, "No." Then Dr. Christianson asked Steve, "Steve, would you do ten more Push-ups so Jenny can have a donut that she doesn't want?" Steve did ten...and Jenny got a donut.

By now, a growing sense of uneasiness filled the room. The students were beginning to say "No" and there were all these uneaten donuts on the desks. Steve also had to really put forth a lot of extra effort to get these pushups done for each donut. There began to be a small pool of sweat on the floor beneath his face, his arms and brow were beginning to get red because of the physical effort involved.

Dr. Christianson asked Robert, who was the most vocal unbeliever in the class, to watch Steve do each push

*Continued on Page 6*

## Pushups and Donuts (Continued from Page 5)

up to make sure he did the full ten pushups in a set because he couldn't bear to watch all of Steve's work for all of those uneaten donuts. He sent Robert over to where Steve was so Robert could count the set and watch Steve closely. Dr. Christianson started down the fourth row.

During his class, however, some students from other classes had wandered in and sat down on the steps along the radiators that ran down the sides of the room. When the professor realized this, he did a quick count and saw that now there were 34 students in the room. He started to worry if Steve would be able to make it. Dr. Christianson went on to the next person and the next and the next. Near the end of that row, Steve was really having a rough time. He was taking a lot more time to complete each set.

Steve asked Dr. Christianson, "Do I have to make my nose touch on each one?" Dr. Christianson thought for a moment, "Well, they're your pushups. You are in charge now. You can do them any way that you want." And Dr. Christianson went on.

A few moments later, Jason, a recent transfer student, came to the room and was about to come in when all the students yelled in one voice, "NO! Don't come in! Stay out!" Jason didn't know what was going on. Steve picked up his head and said, "No, let him come." Professor Christianson said, "You realize that if Jason comes in you will have to do ten pushups for him?" Steve said, "Yes, let him come in. Give him a donut" Dr. Christianson said, "Okay, Steve, I'll let you get Jason's out of the way right now. Jason, do you want a donut?" Jason, new to the room hardly knew what was going on. "Yes," he said, "give me a donut." "Steve, will you do ten push-ups so that Jason can have a donut?" Steve did ten pushups very slowly and with great effort. Jason, bewildered, was handed a donut and sat down.

Dr. Christianson finished the fourth row, and then started on those visitors seated by the heaters. Steve's arms were now shaking with each push-up in a struggle to lift himself against the force of gravity. Sweat was profusely dropping off of his face, and by this time there was no sound except his heavy breathing. There was not a dry eye in the room.

The very last two students in the room were two young women, both cheerleaders, and very popular. Dr. Christianson went to Linda, the second to last, and asked, "Linda, do you want a doughnut?" Linda said, very sadly, "No, thank you." Professor Christianson

quietly asked, "Steve, would you do ten push-ups so that Linda can have a donut she doesn't want?" Grunting from the effort, Steve did ten very slow pushups for Linda.

Then Dr. Christianson turned to the last girl, Susan. "Susan, do you want a donut?" Susan, with tears flowing down her face, began to cry. "Dr. Christianson, can't I help him?"

Dr. Christianson, with tears of his own, said, "No, Steve has to do it alone, I have given him this task and he is in charge of seeing that everyone has an opportunity for a donut whether they want it or not. When I decided to have a party this last day of class, I looked at my grade book. Steve, here is the only student with a perfect grade. Everyone else has failed a test, skipped class, or offered me inferior work. Steve told me that in football practice, when a player messes up he must do push-ups... I



told Steve that none of you could come to my party unless he paid the price by doing your push ups. He and I made a deal for your sakes.

Steve, would you do ten push-ups so Susan can have a donut?" As Steve very slowly finished his last pushup, with the understanding that he had accomplished all that was required of him, having done 350 pushups, his arms buckled beneath him and he fell to the floor.

Dr. Christianson turned to the room and said. "And so it was, that our Savior, Jesus Christ, on the cross, plead to the Father, 'into thy hands I commend my spirit.' With the understanding that He had done everything that was required of Him, he yielded up His life. And like some of those in this room, many of us leave the gift on the desk, uneaten."

Two students helped Steve up off the floor and to a seat, physically exhausted, but wearing a thin smile. "Well done, good and faithful servant," said the professor, adding, "Not all sermons are preached in words."

Turning to his class the professor said, "My wish is that you might understand and fully comprehend all the riches of grace and mercy that have been given to you through the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He spared not only His Begotten Son, but gave Him up for us all for the whole Church, now and forever. Whether or not we choose to accept His gift to us, the price has been paid. Wouldn't you be foolish and ungrateful to leave it laying on the desk?"

## PERAMBULATIONS

### Sometimes Action is the Loving Way By Pam Rice

In looking back at the incident now, we can see what a troublemaker Rosa Parks was. She knew that life was not fair towards black people, but instead of being loving and trying to talk with the bus driver to resolve the problem, she took matters into her own hands. She sat where she was not supposed to, got herself arrested, and sent to jail. Maybe she wanted to get her story in the papers nationwide. Certainly she planned a year-long bus boycott which was ruinous to both drivers and the company.

She described herself as a good Christian woman. Wasn't the Christian way to be loving? Surely the local chapter of the NAACP to which she belonged would have made sufficient progress eventually by just meeting with the owners of the bus company and in Christian love and humility asking for change. Those owners were very likely Christian too. They would have seen the error of their ways. It didn't take an arrest, nationwide publicity and a yearlong boycott to solve the problem.

In that same era in California Cesar Chavez got tired of the desperately poor conditions under which migrant workers picked the grapes that would grace California tables. Cesar was a devout Catholic. He knew of the love we are supposed to have towards all of God's children. Why then didn't he just talk to the owners of the fields in which thousands of Mexicans worked in slave like conditions? Oh no, he fasted for over a month, he started a boycott of table grapes causing great financial stress to the owners. That wasn't necessary. He initiated marches and repeated attempts to organize a union. It could have been solved so much more easily with brotherly talk and love, and maybe even prayer.

There are places in Africa, many of them, in fact, where little girls as young as six undergo a cruel mutilation called female circumcision. This is often done under totally unsanitary conditions with no medical follow-up. It is not unusual for the girls to die horrible deaths as a result of infection. This, of course, is done so that they will not have any pleasure in the sexual act. That would make them unfaithful to their husbands. By the age of twelve or so the survivors are married off to older men who want children – hopefully male. They do get pregnant, some of them, and are giving birth at a very young

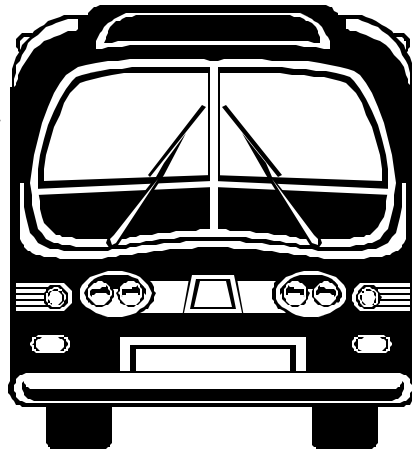
age. Because their bodies are not mature enough for a pregnancy, and these births are almost never attended by medical personnel, the death of infants and mothers is not unusual. In the process of that birth, many of the girls experience tearing of the bladder. This makes it impossible for them to hold their urine after giving birth. Their husbands could hardly be expected to keep them. They have bad odors from constantly leaking urine. They are sent out to the city streets to fend for themselves until infection or brutality afford them a merciful death.

This is not an almost unheard-of practice in some remote village. It happens to thousands of girls each year. But...that's the culture they live in, those are their rules and we must love and be understanding. Maybe if we sent some medical personnel to explain to the men of this culture that this is a dangerous and barbaric practice, they would stop doing it. If we approach it in the love that our Savior taught, that culture would change wouldn't it? Does not love and prayer conquer all?

The two great commandments – love God with all your heart and your neighbors as yourselves. These stand as the bedrock of our faith. They are in no way flawed; they are perfect commandments.

At the same time we are called upon to react to injustice. If we read carefully the acts of our Lord, He did just that. He drove the moneychangers out of the temple, he healed the blind and the lepers. He was criticized for doing those things by those who saw poverty, disease, and injustice as part of the culture and therefore sanctioned by God.

Love often calls us to place the spotlight on injustice and bring treatment for the disease. Yes, we must talk together and be as sisters and brothers to one another. We must pray together for peace and the strength to take action when and where we can. Feeding the poor, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison, caring for those with illness and disease, bringing justice for all of God's children is what we are asked to do. May we pray for the strength to follow God's will for our lives.



# STABILITY & CONVERSION OF LIFE: More Benedictine Wisdom for Non-Monastics

Third in a Series on Benedictine Spirituality by Lynn Huber

When a Benedictine is professed, s/he takes three vows: stability, obedience and conversion of life. In the last issue of *The Crowning Times* we looked at obedience; this month we will consider the other two, stability and conversion of life.

## *Stability*

In our nation, where the average person moves every five years and the average marriage is as likely to end in divorce as to fulfill the promise "until death do us part", the vow of stability seems either quaint or very appealing, depending on how sick we are of the fickleness and ever-accelerating rate of change in our lives. Perhaps "new" is not an unmitigated blessing!

The community, for a Benedictine nun or monk, is *the* locus for the living out of vows. One Benedictine elder I interviewed described it as "both the place of our wounding and the place of our healing." Benedictines sit several times a day, facing half--and shoulder to shoulder with the other half--of their lifetime community—whether they are at peace with them, at loggerheads, or indifferent, praying the office together as in one voice, and later eating meals together. For me this embodies the commitment to stability.

In 'the world' many people leave their church at the time of conflict (divorce or other conflict) just when to stay might allow them to find a way to really live in community in the sight of God and their Christian brothers and sisters. They thus cut themselves off from the gift: the way for healing to follow wounding.

The sacrament of marriage involves not only the two who are married, but God, and the Christian community of which the couple is a part. I

have come to understand Christian marriage as a religious community itself, one in which each of the partners has discerned a call to marriage as the best way for her/himself to get to God, *so that* problems and troubles are a way of overcoming ego, experiencing the discipline of perseverance, and finally becoming holy.

How many people have you known who avoid any social occasion at which they are likely to be confronted with someone who has wounded them, or whom they have wounded? One friend of mine quit a dearly beloved social club for the sole reason that an antagonist attended it too. What a difference there might be if we made a commitment of stability to the organizations that support things we love! How might we learn that in that commitment we can find reconciliation and healing? Instead we flee from confrontation and reinforce the destructive pattern of leaving before we find the gift.

## *Conversion of Life*

*Conversatio Morum*, the third of the Benedictine vows is impossible of translation. The translation which seems to capture it best for me is "ongoing conversion of life." There are two aspects of this on which I want to focus. First is the idea that conversion is not a one-time event in life but the very nature of life in Christ itself. Second is the understanding that the daily events of life offer us all we need in the way of tools, *if* we are willing to receive them for that purpose, and are able to stay awake.

As a young person I thought conversion was like a wedding: you got the idea, you came together with others in a public ceremony (in the case of conversion, a service of Baptism rather than a wedding service--and as an adult convert, I *do* remember mine), and then you were "finished." You lived happily ever after.

I have learned that conversion is, rather, like marriage. You need the impetus of the formal ceremonial promise, the support of the community, and the sacramental blessing, in order to have the strength and tools to create the marriage, a life-long task. The same is true with life in Christ.

Another way to think of conversion is as a two-step process, the first being short term--a recognition of one's unmistakable need for God and praying the most sincere of all prayers: "HELP!" The second is long term—an ongoing realization that God has a need for *me*, and that I must be willing to undergo the lifelong process of being reformed in the image of God's Beloved so that I can do what is needed.



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## Benedictine Wisdom (Continued from Page 8)

The two are not as separate as this makes it sound. Daily, in the humiliations of discovering how far short we fall of the ideal to which we aspire, we learn we need God's grace and healing and forgiveness in order to survive at all. So we turn (con-vert) yet again to ask for it. "Help!"

But as we discover those gifts, more and more we yearn to share them with others, so that all may be blessed. It is in that yearning that we discover God's need for us—to be the hands and hearts and eyes and ears and feet and hands of Christ's body to the world.

Going to Denver Women's Correctional Facility for Kairos teams and to do weekly spiritual direction is a micro-cosmic experience of this whole journey for me. I go because I believe from prayer and pondering that somehow God wants me there. I go knowing how inadequate I feel—a married, middle class, not-having-suffered-much, white, Episcopal woman trying to speak God's word of love to mostly non-married, non-middle class, having-suffered-much, Black-White-Hispanic, mostly non-Episcopal, women. What can I say to connect with their life experience? How can I avoid playing the fool or the holier than thou? How can I teach and pray in a way that meets their need?

The secret is in taking my eyes off me. Rather I must ask how God can work to connect with their life experience (parenthetically, through me), to teach and pray and meet their needs. Everything is possible with God.

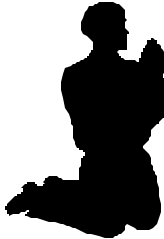
And when I get there, amazingly almost every time, God does a miracle. Some-unknown-blessed-how, they see God's love in me. What is more, I see god's love in *them!* Thinking I have gone to offer, I discover that I have gone to receive. God prays through them, connecting with my life experience. God teaches through them, in a strange way that is both humbling and blessing me at the same time. And so I discover my need, and discover that I am to be God's instrument, simultaneously.

I seek and serve Christ in them; I am sought and served by Christ in them.

This happens over and over and over in my life as well. I drive onto the highway, concerned to get where I am going. And someone pulls over to avoid the almost-accident that I didn't even see coming. I discover again that I have put myself in the center of the universe, and repent.

I get impatient with my husband, and then learn of some of the pressures of his day. I discover again that I have put myself in the center of the universe, and repent.

I sit in my prayer place in the morning, reflecting in mind and journal on the day before, and discover the myriad of ways in which God has gifted me during the prior twenty



four hours, and give thanks. I discover the invitations not noticed, and repent. I notice the way nature has surrounded the various moments of the day with the glories of God—in bird, sunset, moon-rise, snow or rain, and give praise.

Conversatio morum. Hard to translate. But providing a gift of awareness of the process of ongoing transformation that never ends until (perhaps) we cross the Jordan. Let the idea help you to receive the daily gifts, respond to the daily opportunities for thanksgiving, praise, repentance, and perhaps above all renewal of your awareness of how utterly dependent you are and how utterly reliable is God's steadfast love. And give thanks.

### Conclusion

Both stability (I stick it out) and conversion of life (I get changed by everything that happens while I am sticking it out) are gifts offered to us by God, and clarified (at least for me) by my association with the Benedictines. May you too be blessed by their wisdom.

Let me know if you have responses, questions, or experiences of your own with discovering the gift of ongoing conversion in your life, that you would be willing to share. You can reach me at 12295 W. Applewood Knolls Dr. Lakewood, CO 80215; 303-274-5551; or Huberpal@msn.com.

### Ten Reasons Why the English Language is so Hard to Learn

- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
- 2) The farm was used to produce produce.
- 3) The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
- 4) We must polish the Polish furniture.
- 5) He could lead if he would get the lead out.
- 6) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
- 7) Since there's no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
- 8) A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
- 9) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
- 10) I did not object to the object.

# Come to Virginia



National Episcopal Cursillo Seminar  
October 21 - 23, 2005 Virginia Beach, VA

“Gather Us In” will be the theme for Seminar 2005.

There will be some changes in schedule from previous years. Pre-seminar workshops will not be offered and the Seminar will begin Thursday evening.

Besides the important work or reunion with old friends, a chance to worship together, learning from each other, and stewarding the movement, this Seminar will offer a great opportunity for vacations before or after to enjoy the ocean, beaches, seafood and national historic sites like Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown.

Make your plans now to be in southern Virginia for October 21-23. Watch future *News Notes*, on-line at [www.episcopalcurtillo.org](http://www.episcopalcurtillo.org), and in the *4th Day Magazine* for information about the Seminar and registration forms.

## 2004-2005 Colorado Cursillo Secretariat

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## Lay Director's Letter

(Continued from Page 1)

yourself, could I give just \$10 to make it happen? If so, please don't hesitate! Send your check, payable to Colorado Episcopal Cursillo to our treasurer Sue Emerson. Then let me hear from you. What is your "Wouldn't it be nice if we..."?

I just have one more comment to make. The Diocese of Colorado has been selected as the location for the 2007 National Episcopal Cursillo Seminar. This is a huge honor and will be a wonderful opportunity for us to "show off" our state and our strong Cursillo movement. Bringing this event to Colorado, however, will definitely require resources, both human and financial. So as you are writing your \$10 check, think about whether or not you have another \$10 to seed the 2007 NECS fund. And then ask God what time and talent he is asking you to give to make this event the best NECS ever!!

*Ultreya,*

*Missi Kern*

*Lay Director*

## A Christmas Story (Continued from Page 12)

Well, two of the grandchildren decided that there would never be a better opportunity to learn the family history, so they convinced Mom and Katie to be interviewed on camera. We set up chairs in front of the Christmas tree, and the adult grandchildren sat behind the video cam and asked questions. The rest of us watched--and learned. We learned of infants and children who did not survive. We learned how the family grew and managed to live in a three-bedroom house. We learned how great-grandpop butchered hogs and smoked the meat in a smoke-house he built, and how the community bought railcar loads of grapes to split up and make wine with a winepress in the basement.

We learned of childhood pranks and romances. We heard how the family survived the depression. Mostly it was a story of family and community, a community of immigrants trying desperately to raise families while working in the mines and mills and factories. Many of the early children felt lucky to have completed eighth grade. Later children finished high school and went on to trade schools. We learned how Pop and Mom met and how their relationship developed under Grand Pop's watchful parenting. And how they corresponded while Pop was in Europe during WWII. We did *not* learn about how they celebrated his homecoming. "That's my business and none of yours!" Mom de-

clared. So be it.

For me, the most memorable moment came at the end when the last question was asked: "What is your hope for the future--for the family, for the country?" Mom answered the family portion with hopes that her progeny would work hard and prosper. Katie responded to the second part: "I believe many people in the country have lost hope, and lost religion. My hope is that they will return to religion because that is the source of hope."

And what can our only response be?

Amen, Wise Woman!

## IN THE WIND

### Servant Community Meets; Weekend Applications Revised

The Colorado Cursillo Servant Community (CSC) met on Saturday, January 8, 2005 at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Centennial.

Bernie Maly's guitar led us in making a joyful noise and there was plenty to eat, as usual. The group discussed a number of activities underway within the CSC designed to support the Colorado Secretariat in promoting Cursillo and maximizing involvement of Cursillistas in the Fourth Day, including:

- Creation of a weekend leaders' guide filled with guidelines, suggestions, and ideas to assist leaders and potential leaders in the planning and preparation of a weekend. Sue Richardson is leading this effort.
- Revision of the candidate and sponsor/rector applications for Colorado Cursillo weekends.
- Plans for follow-up contacts with new Cursillistas to obtain feedback about weekend experiences and to encourage participation in reunion groups, ultreyas, and weekend teams.

CSC members left feeling excited about the possibilities! The next CSC meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 4 at St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Aurora.

#### And then.....

Shortly after the meeting, Jane Owens and Sue Richardson began work on revised applications. They gathered doz-

ens of sample Cursillo applications from internet sites and reviewed them for ideas and approaches.

The twin goals of the Secretariat and the Servant Community for the applications were....1) to better inform and remind sponsors of the importance of their roles in the their candidate's weekend experience; and 2) to gather more complete information about candidates that will help weekend leaders understand them better.

Based on these goals, applications were drafted by Sue and Jane and then reviewed by the Secretariat, whose comments and suggestions were used in subsequent drafts. The Secretariat has approved the final version of the new applications, which will be available on the website in the near future.

**PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR NEXT**

**SERVANT COMMUNITY MEETING**

**Saturday, June 4, 2005 ~ 9 AM—12 Noon**

**St. Martin-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church**

**4740 S. Buckley Road**

**Aurora, CO**



## Colorado Episcopal Cursillo

c/o St. Martin-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church

4740 South Buckley Road

Aurora, CO 80015

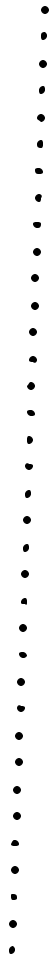
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## THE CROWING TIMES

Make a friend; be a friend;  
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We're on the Web!  
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## THE LAST WORD

### A Christmas Story

By Jon Rhodes

My wife and I spent the last Christmas holiday at her mother's home in New Jersey. It was a family reunion with most of the immediate family there to celebrate the holiday. We had 3 of 4 children, their spouses and children, as well as Mom and Aunt Katie. It was an important get-together simply because Mom and Katie are 82 and 87 years old, and the family, though close-knit emotionally, is spread out across the country. We simply cannot be together as much as we would like. Both Mom and Katie have fewer infirmities than one might expect, and both are mentally sharp. Praise the Lord! Both are independent, live alone and are hard headed, stubborn and set in their ways. Even if those weren't family traits, their ages would entitle them to those qualities and more! Mom still drives, but Katie never learned, or she might be driving too.

We celebrated Christmas and family. We played "Guesstures" and "American Trivia". We ate (too much), we discussed (safe subjects), and sometimes argued (the unsafe ones). We missed and remembered Pop, who died 4

years ago. Each person brought a single gift, all of which were enthusiastically traded on Christmas Eve. I ended up with the travel version of the book "Worst Case Scenario", in which the common advice to each crisis is "REMAIN CALM". Some one suggested that go around the neighborhood singing Christmas Carols. Suffice it to say that we did NOT go caroling, and the neighbors will forever remain unaware of their good fortune. We did attend Christmas mass together and sing "Silent Night" along with several hundred other vocally challenged celebrants.

Mom and Katie are lifelong Catholics, and two of thirteen children of immigrant parents. They've worked in stores, cotton mills and a

host of unskilled labor jobs to help their parents support the large family. Katie still lives in the family home.

By now you may be musing: "Sounds wonderful, but what is the point?"

Can my conscience  
lead me astray?

*(Continued on page 11)*