



Forward

Cursillo in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

Volume XIII

October 2008

Our Mission: To Christianize Environments and Develop Lay Leadership

From the Chair

As a member of the Stewardship committee at my church, I have been attending meetings for the past few weeks after church. One thing we are talking about is how we can extend our stewardship campaign into the next year. In conjunction with that, we have been discussing our many ministries, some small and almost unknown to most of us, others large and perhaps taken for granted. I myself have begun to think of these ministries as our apostolic actions, in some cases; and as palanca in other cases. What is a ministry that takes bread to the newcomers and visitors to our church, an outreach program I was unaware of? I think it would be fair to call it palanca, which is an apostolic action in itself.

One thing we are asked to do as Cursillistas is to have an apostolic action every week to talk about in group, and it is a powerful incentive to me to do uncomfortable things, just as having to report on study every week makes me feel guilty enough to read something. I don't mean to say that grouping is the only way I stay on track, but it does encourage me to do things I wouldn't otherwise do, and over time, apostolic action has become more natural to me. I hope this has been your experience, too. Today I was talking to some neighbors about their dog, who they keep hidden because there is some question of whether the apartment allows dogs. They adore their dog, and I suggested to them that maybe they would like to take their dog over to All Saints' Vista for the Blessing of the Animals. They are very excited about it, and see it as an opportunity to have a new enrichment opportunity for the dog, but I see it as a new enrichment opportunity for them. I usually have trouble inviting people to church, but this was so easy. I wish it could always be that way, but usually I have to do something more time consuming, like make a quilt for Prayers and Squares, or talk to someone who I don't know too well about attending the next Cursillo weekend.

The Good News in all of this is that if we do the hard work, we often are rewarded in some unexpected ways. It's not always successful when we reach out, and often the results remain unknown, but just often enough to keep us going, there is something tangible that encourages us to keep trying. So I encourage everyone to keep trying, and - oh, remember - to send back your Stewardship card when it comes, and fill in the part about ministries. It is Apostolic Action!

Blessings, Jane

THE 2008 SECRETARIAT

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Grand Ultreya at St. Dunstan's Saturday, November 8, at 6:00 P.M.

Elections are coming! Yes, we are electing a new president of our country. And, we are also electing new Secretariat members. So you are a voter! Come to St. Dunstan's to make your vote count. If you have a nomination, please tell a Secretariat member right away. The nominee should be active in Cursillo in some way, a member of the Episcopal Church in this Diocese, and a member of our community for at least one year.

We will have a potluck, music, grouping, a witness, echo speaker, and clergy response. Also, some Cursillo materials should be available. We have a great opportunity to meet all our new cursillistas from the fall weekend. This gathering will be the first ultreya for them. So, if you sponsored one or more cursillistas, please attend with them.

Bring your song books. I shall see you there.

Ted Parsons
4th Day Co-Chair



Christmas Party on December 13

We will have our second annual Christmas party at Good Samaritan. This party is for all our community. We are not having an ultreya, but will have a potluck starting at 6:00 P.M.. We shall have music, including Christmas music. Bring your songbooks and gifts! What gifts?

We are again asking for donations for adults who are served by ECS. Last year we had an enormous number and amount of donations! Please bring as little or as much as you want. Typically, at this time of year, the adults do not receive needed items. So ECS was quite grateful to us for filling that need. Suggestions include towels and washcloths, toiletries, socks, and underwear. You will hear more specifics at a later date. Thank you!

Ted Parsons
Secretariat member and 4th Day Co-Chair

From the Rector

In order to be a leader for God, you must first be a servant. from Matthew 20:26

Greetings!

We have had two team meetings so far, in addition to the first-time training offered by the Servant Community. Thank you to all who said "yes" to serving this week-end, it is a blessing to work side-by-side with all of you. We can still use a couple of workers if you're willing, we'd love to have you join us!

If you are unable to work the weekend, please consider helping out the Sunday Angels, I know they can really use your help. If you're interested in serving as an angel, please call Bill Blakeslee at 619-276-3312.

The final team meeting is October 11 at St. Alban's, beginning at 8:30 a.m..

In His Service,
Frank Orta, Rector Cursillo #125

Cursillo #125 Team

Donna	Benedict	Bill	Olson
Michael	Benedict	Petra	Orta
David	Berglund	Frank	Orta
Diane	Blaisdell	Ted	Parsons
Judy	Brown	Pat	Parsons
Pete	Casalegno	David	Peterson
Bryan	Chan	Eileen	Pierce
Gustavo	Covarrubias	Judy	Potter
Mirna	Covarrubias	Ken	Rice
Ed	Embick	Maria	Roman
Fr Paul	Gambling	Larry	Salvadori
Margarita	Garcia	Jeanne	Salvadori
Carlos	Garcia	Jane	Schuler
Haidee	Joy	Pastor John	Sieber
Dora	Lozano	Tom	Slipper
Bertha	Martinez	Rochelle	Thompson
Susan	Miller	Fr Michael	Todd
Pat	Moore	Canon Jenny	Vervynck
Karen	Nelson	Marilyn	Vickrey
Lynn	Nicholson	Kathy	Wood
Craig	Noble	Jamie	Wood

Please note: Candidate names are not available at this time, but will be posted on the website as soon as they are available. Please check www.sdcursillo.org

Look for the next Forward in early December.
Articles, calendar events and other materials are due (preferably in Word format) *no later than November 28.*

Send to:

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WITNESS TALK GIVEN AT ULTREYA - LINDA LYONS

We moved to California in 1991 and from the time we got here I felt like we were walking through the book of Job. Whatever could go wrong did. But my relationship with Jesus got me through it all. My brother had surgery a couple of months ago and as I was waiting with his mate she said, "I wish that I had your faith." As a result, I always thought that I had a pretty strong relationship with Jesus. Then I went to work for Welcome Home. I actually got laid off from my job in September and I couldn't find a job. I went on a lot of interviews. I am an accountant. You would have thought that it wouldn't have been that hard, especially once the New Year started. But as in all things, God had a plan. I had to wait until the job and Welcome Home became available. And it did, at the end of January.

Welcome Home is a ministry that is a peer-driven reentry program for women. What does peer-driven mean? Well, usually when you go for an interview and fill out an application, you are asked if you have ever had a felony. If you say yes, your chances of getting hired are probably slim to none. Except if you are applying for a job at Welcome Home. If you say no, your chances of getting hired are slim to none. I am one of the exceptions. But they have accepted me anyways.

So what does this have to do with my witness? I was e-mailing Ted as he going to give the response talk and he asked if I was going to talk about what I have done for Jesus to help these women, what I have done to share my faith with these women. How the Holy Spirit has made a difference in their lives through me.

I thought about those questions and went back to thinking about me witnessing. Do I do a good job witnessing what the Lord has done in my life? I think that for the most part I do but I usually do it quietly. If someone asks I will explain my faith and how the experiences in my life, both good and bad, have been strengthened by my faith, but I don't usually go around telling people about Jesus. I have historically not been one to preach the gospel in words; my style was more in action. What I do says who I am. This is where Welcome Home comes in and brings me up short.

I have met women, and work with women, who shouldn't by all accounts be here. They are women who have been through hell and back. Often physically and sexually abused at sometime in their lives, usually at a young age, they turned to drugs and alcohol to make the memories and pain go away. Many have emotional and mental problems. Yet here they are in front of me, some working for me, continually in all things praising the Lord and what he has done in their lives. They not only talk the talk, they walk the walk. Most of them found God in jail and they want to share that story with everyone. They want every woman in jail to know that God loves them, they are forgiven and they don't have to go back to their old lives. Their belief in the Lord is unwavering. What a witness.

I was blessed a couple of weeks ago to write a letter of support for one of our employees who was trying to get her record expunged. I was her Leader on the Kairos Outside weekend she attended about 10 years ago. She was a very new Christian then. I have been blessed over the years to watch her grow in strength not only physically but spiritually. To write a letter for her was overwhelming for me. Here this once broken prostitute now stands before me a strong, beautiful spirit, filled with God's love; a woman who was well known in Las Colinas jail and on the streets who now has an office in Las Colinas jail. What amazing things God can do when we put our trust in him.

Again, what does this have to do with me witnessing? Well watching women who have gone through so much, openly sharing their love of the Lord, and their salvation story with all who will listen has made it so much easier for me to talk about Jesus to people I meet. I know now that no matter where the Lord sends me, I will not be afraid to talk about my love of the Lord. I am not uncomfortable saying, "Praise God" no matter where I am. I am not afraid to witness my love of the Lord and I often now can do this through talking about the Welcome Home women.

I believe that God has brought me to Welcome Home to help me learn to be more open in my witnessing. I truly believe that most of the experiences in our lives can make us more open to witness to God's power and healing. Prayers are answered all the time. Not in our time but in God's time. How often do we give up praying because we don't think that God is listening?

These women are not ashamed to pray whenever and wherever. I am learning to be more like them. It is not really the Episcopal way. No matter whom we are meeting with we pray before the meeting to ask God to bring us wisdom, knowledge and be present among us. We ask the people who we are meeting if they are comfortable with us praying, if they say no, we tell them that they can step out of the room until we are done because we will be starting the meeting with prayer. Can you imagine ever doing that in any of your secular meeting? Guess what? Only one person has ever walked out. However, at the next meeting he stayed.

We pray before we eat; we pray when someone drops in and has a problem, we pray for someone who has called in with a problem, women call me up and ask me to pray with them on the phone and to continue praying for them. We pray unceasingly. St Paul in 1st Thessalonians 5:17 said, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." I am learning to live this. My faith is stronger today because of Welcome Home.

Linda Lyons Witness (Cont.)

My first phone call each morning is from our Executive Director, Carmen Warner Robbins reading me the scripture of day and then praying for us, for the ministry, for any special requests that either one of us has gotten in the last 24 hours. I have to tell you that I look forward to this call.

Every Monday morning we have a staff meeting, we take turns doing the meditation. They are usually so beautiful and profound. So again how has this helped me? I have found that my prayer life and my study life have become so much stronger because of sinners not saints.

The wealth of assurance that these women carry just humble me. As I see the beauty of God in each one of them, I am in awe of the power of God if we only believe. One of their most often recited verses is Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Each one of them is confident that the Lord will answer our prayers because he already has by what he has done in their lives. But this did not just simply happen one day. They didn't pray and all of a sudden life was beautiful. Often their prayers went on for years, often through pain, suffering and incarceration. But through it all they held on to the belief that God would answer their prayers, heal them and he did, they are living examples of answered prayer. I now know that God is listening and I pray with that same assurance that God knows the desires of my heart and he will honor them if I in turn honor him. Maybe not today, or tomorrow but he will answer them when the time is right. Today I am able to carry around that blessed assurance. What a gift.



Ultreya Witness Speakers? We all Are!

Do you know what a witness speaker is supposed to do? Here are my thoughts:

- Speak 5-10 minutes, no more!
- It is NOT the story of how the person became a Christian.
- It IS a short story of what the person is doing to carry out the Great Commission for Jesus.

In other words, it is apostolic action. What am I doing to share my faith with another through actions or words or both? What was my plan? How did I carry out my plan? And what were the results of my plan? Sometimes the plan is not executed yet. Sometimes we are in the process of carrying out our plan. And sometimes our plan did not work...yet!

The focus needs (ideally) to be on planned actions, not opportunistic actions. However, we all still need to be alert for opportunities that God presents to us.

One concern or observation I have is that sometimes people tell a great story, but fail to tell us the punch line! Did anyone's life change? Did anyone start coming to church? Did anyone give his life to our Lord and Savior?

Sometimes others may discuss ministries. They may not be apostolic action. For instance, reading from the lectern as a lector/ reader is NOT apostolic action. Administering the chalice is NOT apostolic action. There is no plan to bring someone to Christ through the reading. However, giving a children's sermon or teaching Sunday School is both a ministry and apostolic action. We who are supposedly more mature in our faith can influence the children. Then they understand more about Jesus so that they are closer to becoming mature Christians.

Also, some people may have been Christians but are not now. We can have apostolic action to bring them back to Christ. And sometimes our apostolic action may be to heal our church, either our parish or the wider church!

Every Cursillista, and every Christian, should be able to give a witness talk. The talk should address something we are doing now or did in the recent past. What is recent? Roughly it is the last six months, not 20 years ago.

One more comment. I have also heard one or more technical objection to the word "witness". The argument is, "I am a witness and give my testimony." In other words, a witness testifies as to what he is doing for Jesus. Just as in court, a witness testifies. The witness does not "witness". However, Cursillistas normally define "witness" as a verb to mean "what are we doing for Jesus?", or a noun to be the person. We define "testimony" as what Jesus did for us.

Are you now ready to be a witness for Jesus? If so, let your parish rep know or Judy Anderson and Ted Parsons, 4th Day Co-chairs



Welcome to Back to the Mountain!

Jan. 9, 10 & 11, 2009

Why come to Back to the Mountain?

In the midst of our busy lives, take time to hear God in the silence and beauty of Camp Stephens.

We are so thankful for friends who convinced us to attend our first Back to the Mountain in 1999. We learned the benefits of beginning the New Year focused on our Lord.

During this weekend you will hear three spiritual talks and several meditations. You will have the opportunity to share in table discussions and sing praises to our Lord.

Personally, you will have plenty of time to relax and enjoy yourself with time for reflection and meditation, catching up with Christian friends or just walking in the woods.

During this special weekend with God, we have the opportunity to suspend our worldly cares for a brief time. It is an opportunity to center our mind, body and soul. There will be no crowded airports or motels. No lost luggage or reservations. No harried mad dash to meet schedules.

So we invite you for a time to be in His presence, to pray, to celebrate, to renew friendships, to heal, to share, to learn, to grow, to dream, and perhaps to begin again.

Then, leaving the mountain with increased faith, hope and love, we will be ready for the opportunities, challenges and joys God has in store for us in 2009! Come and let us be together in the New Year!

For questions you may contact Steve or Sally Nichols 858-277-1872

Email: SANFHS@AOL.COM

De Colores,

Sally and Steve Nichols



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- 2 Secretariat, Good Samaritan, 6:30 PM
- 11 Cursillo Team Meeting, St. Alban's, 8:30-3:00
- 16-19 Coed Cursillo #125, Camp Stevens - Frank Orta, Rector

NOVEMBER

- 1 Day of Deeper Understanding, St. Timothy's, 8:30 AM
- 6 Secretariat, Good Samaritan, 6:30 PM
- 8 Grand Ultraya & Secretariat elections, St. Dunstan's, 6:00 PM
- 28 Deadline for Forward articles (see P. 2)

DECEMBER

- 6 Servant Community Meeting, Good Samaritan, 9:00 AM
- 6 Secretariat Meeting, Good Samaritan, 12:30 PM
- 13 Cursillo Christmas Party, Good Samaritan, 6:00 PM