

## THE FOURTH DAY

July 2008

[www.cursillotoronto.com](http://www.cursillotoronto.com)

### Message from the Lay Director

My name is Franz Gangl. I made my Cursillo in October 1995, sitting at St. Stephen's Table. I was 25 when I made my Cursillo, and now, am married for almost 11 years, and have two wonderful children, Sebastian and Katarina.

I am so blessed to be part of this incredible movement. I have learned, and seen, and it is my greatest hope that a person CAN change, with the grace of God. This is a singularly monumental truth, and I have witnessed it first hand in the Cursillo. Once a person has come to understand that God loves them, wonderful changes can happen, and sometimes, they become new persons in the light of God.

I have learned the power of service, in putting oneself at the service of others. This first became apparent to me on my first weekend, watching team members clear the table after mealtime. I was amazed at how effortlessly, and without complaint did the team serve the candidates. There is joy in service, and in the act of serving a means to break down barriers in human relationships. What I have learned in Cursillo, has help me enormously in my work life, and my family life.

On February 6th, 2008, our beloved founder, Eduardo Bonnin went to be with the Lord. Our next Archdiocesan Ultreya, on June 7th, will be a celebration of Eduardo's life, and the legacy that he left. Please make every effort to be present for this wonderful opportunity to remember and celebrate our founder.

Eduardo was a young man when he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to develop the Cursillo methodology. And today, we see so many young people that are continually buffeted by the changing rapids and currents of the world. As my greatest hope is that people can change, I am also compelled to share that good news with my friends. It IS possible to change.

The world lures us into continual distractions and concerns and worries in so many ways today. It is sometimes a struggle to simply be quiet for even a short while. But if one can be still, and eliminate the "world clutter", he may hear God calling. And, perhaps, in hearing the call, he may choose to make changes in his life. And, with help from new found, like minded friends, he may persevere. That is the gift of Cursillo. Eduardo's legacy is never more needed than today.

I am offering my Palanca that others may find quiet, and that in the quiet hear God's call. Palanca is a vital tool for the Cursillista.

We will be having our next Cursillo weekends in the fall. The dates are November 20-23rd for the men and December 4-7th for the women, at Consolata Missionaries. This gives us plenty of opportunity to develop our friendships. I intend to use this time to offer Palanca and to "use my knees" to ask for the Lord's help in identifying those that can be "partners" in building the kingdom... those that I will invite to experience Cursillo.

Decolores!  
Franz Gangl

## **Infected, and Infecting by Fr. Terry McKenna (Spiritual Director)**

No, this article is not about the imminent epidemic of influenza. It's about the foundational charism of our Cursillo movement.

Our title refers to language which we hear in the rollos on the third of the three days. It is terminology which we use to describe the purpose and strategy of the movement.

As Cursillistas know, the third of the three days is designed to help the candidate imagine how this newly-found life in grace can be transferred to their normal lives at home, to the workplace and to other frequent environments.

The mentality of our founders did not include a formidable burden of coaxing one's family members, co-workers and others to come to a deeper life of faith. Rather, our approach is much more natural and relaxed. We are confident that our faith is caught, not taught. Is this not how we come to know Christ, the Father and the Holy Spirit? Some of us inhaled the gospel during our growing years in our family homes. Others of us would testify that the living faith of one or more Catholics rubbed off onto us in our neighbourhoods, workplace or other environment.

This is what we mean by being infected! We have not chosen Christ, He has chosen us! He sent fishers of people to lower their nets for us. He who is our ransom from eternal death has snatched us for the Father! We are infected with sanctifying grace!

To intensify our infection we practice our Catholic faith with the familiar habits. Further, as Cursillistas, we cultivate our life of grace with our unique methodology. Group reunion, Ultreya and Leaders' School stir and nourish our living faith. These methods keep us reflective, articulate, engaging and contemporary in our experience of grace in our lives.

The more we are infected, the more we are infecting! The more we are wearing our faith as an outer garment, the more we are transferring it to the unwitting neighbours in our circles. A growing faith will always attract those who are uncertain, confused and/or searching. Our good fruit of love, joy, peace and patience will always be absorbed by those who are feeling emptiness and futility. Our humanity, our imagination, is always prepared to consider some concept or solution that seems to be working well and continually for others.

Therefore, I exhort all to discover the truth, the power of our foundational charism.

Practise the methodology!

Develop the mentality!

Embrace the purpose and strategy!

Be infected and infecting!

Decolores,

Father Terry McKenna

### **4th Day Witness by Natalie Lucas**

Growing up in a family of 9, my most awesome parents instilled Catholic values in us, yet I never fully understood what it meant to know God.

With the liberty of making my own decisions in my late teens and early 20's, the temptations of drugs, alcohol and relationships confronted me. I made some bad choices and they were followed by consequences that I was not aware of.

These experiences left me with wounds, affecting my family, health, career and friendships. I felt so separated from God; "does God exist?" was a common question of mine.

I was looking for life where there was no life; all I wanted was to live.

I hungered for truth and in pursuit of it, I saw Catholicism as being "traditional", "rigid," "boring," and "orthodox," so I dabbled in the sects of world religions and was always confounded by an unsettling void.

Many deep realizations about love and my body were revealed to me, helping me to understand the truths of God. In seeking truth, Jesus' words "I am the way, the truth and the life", resounded like no other!

My first awareness of God came in the solitude of my brokenness during the first confession of my sins in a long time.

In this same place, the budding of Christ's love was revealed to me through a man who was a recovering drug addict discerning the priesthood. Through his counsel, I was awe-struck with unworthiness now knowing that I am the temple of the Holy Spirit. How could I have ever hurt my savior in the way that I have?

These realizations gave way to the changes I knew I needed to make. Growing pains set in, in trying to follow Christ.

The life I once sought after slowly dissipated along with the people in it. Christ began to work a new life in me...a new creation rooted in my baptism.

It was my choices that distanced me from God, not God from me; He was always there.

Rejoicing in Christ, I still found myself feeling socially isolated after my past friendships faded. There were not a lot of people I could connect with or relate to in experiencing this change in my life.

I wanted so bad to be with the family of Christ, but where was his church?

In seeking out Christ's true church, I was confronted with questions by other fellow Christians. "Are you saved?", "Do you worship Mary?", "Do you believe the bread becomes the flesh of Christ?", to name a few.

I was so confused and, feeling drawn to Christian fundamentalism, I wanted to leave the Catholic Church. Before I left I needed to find out "WHY"? Why in the Catholic faith do we do what we do? I felt so inadequate not being knowledgeable enough to understand my faith or provide explanations.

At one Sunday mass in late winter 2005, there was an invitation given to "have a life with God and deepen my faith".

This invitation came with a strange name "Cursillo".

I made my Cursillo in June 2006 and I sat at Saint Monica's table. That weekend, I hoped God would show me where he wanted me. I knew it had to be wherever his Son is fully present.

Since the Saturday of my weekend, mass has taken on a whole new meaning.

During the offering, Fr. Terry held the Eucharist with lasting reverence saying "Behold, this is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world...My Lord and My God" Upon looking up at what I once thought was bread, I saw radiance and heard "I AM here, take and eat". Moved to tears, joyfully and unworthily I couldn't maintain my kneeling composure. I approached, what felt like crawling, to receive Him. Understanding was granted that day.

Cursillo has made seen the unseen doorway of Christ's true Church; a first step into the life of grace. Evoking in me a deep love for Jesus and my apostolic Catholic faith, God has used Cursillo as a foretaste of heaven. I've come to see that Cursillo fully lived honors the building of God's Kingdom. With new eyes, He has shown me the budding of His Kingdom, by seeing Christ in the lives of those around me; it's been so beautiful.

I was on fire after my weekend! And being on team during last years women's weekends brought the lived experience of Cursillo full circle. With wind and rain, the fire comes to calm, then reignited along the journey.

Sometimes I find myself putting God on a "wait-list" for a period of time or compromising His will for mine. In doing this, heavy focus on my career and financial planning has shifted my eyes off of Christ, taking away from my morning prayers and meditation. Christ never compromised me, why should I compromise Him?

Compromising Christ recently yielded a spiritual dry spell in my life. Through grouping and Ultreya, I'm encouraged by sharing, going from lived experience to spoken word, sharing similar

times of our walk with the Lord. At a past Ultreya, John of the Cross' *Dark Night of the Soul* was mentioned, and it has intrigued me in my walk with God. I'm discovering another side of God that I never knew before. I don't know if I like it, since at times He seems distant and at other times, so close. With familiarity of these times, my awareness deepens of how God is maturing me in faith so I can tell others about Him.

It's been two years since I made my Cursillo and I want more than anything for God to show me how He wants me to live out my 4th day for His Kingdom's cause.

After working in a life changing role in global outreach and youth ministry, I've come to see that God is calling me to continue in community development. I've fallen in love with people and purpose; this has been an indication of how the Lord wants me to serve Him.

I'm so unworthy and forever speechless that God has reconciled me to Himself through His son Jesus Christ. As I walk with God, He continues to help me understand what I didn't before. I'm at peace as He is nurturing His agape love in me.

No longer will I seek to be free by looking for life where there is no life. I found life in Him, for it is by Him, that I found life.

*"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8:32)

Decolores,  
Natalie

### **WHAT ARE WE BRINGING CANDIDATES TO?**

We want to make it crystal clear what we are bringing candidates to when we bring them to Cursillo. For this we want to hear again the words of Eduardo Bonnin and I quote:

"We always had in mind the Distant Ones, the Faraway. We mean by that those who have wandered away from the Father because they don't know Him and His love. There are so many men and women who have no idea of the Doctrine; no idea of the Truth; this truth that if we believe it with faith and practice it with joy, makes us free men and women.

"God is not just an answer but is THE answer. I have experienced that when a person has faith, when he believes, he trusts and has confidence in the most amazing reality and in the most difficult thing to understand. God in Christ loves us, loves me. Everything else flows abundantly and as an unexpected gift from that.

"I believed then, and I believe today, that it is the Gospel that synthesizes and summarizes best the Christian doctrine. Jesus' message is first and foremost news for man from which is born a preoccupation and arouses a desire to know him. This Christ who, through his grace, offers the surprising possibility of becoming his friend, awakens and reinforces inside of each person the best of who he is.

"The conclusion drawn by those who have lived the experience of Cursillo is the evidence that God loves everyone in Jesus Christ. Each knows that to be Christian is first to feel being loved by God, and to live in wonder of it, since what is most authentically Christian is to let God love us. The interior attitude created by this reality, when believed and fully lived, becomes a leaven and is transmitted to others. But, to grasp this, to experience it, to encounter God who is love, it is necessary to present ourselves to him as we truly are.

"In the PRECURSILLO phase we try to identify, befriend and then help a person who is "searching" for that "something" that he identifies as happiness, or fulfillment, or his ideal, and that we know is really that "somebody" – Christ. In doing so, we broaden and accelerate his search and direct it towards the three essential encounters of Cursillo.

"During the CURSILLO itself, we attempt to crystallize this unrest and searching through the three essential encounters, or meetings, of the person with himself, with Christ and with others, and with the grace of God we almost always do so.

“In spite of this success, we should not think that this person is now a “Christian” and that the job is done. All we can say and feel is that the person has initiated the conversion process, nothing more, but nothing less. When done correctly, and simply, according to the authentic method, the three days instill a hunger and identifies the method he can use to feed this ever growing hunger, a conversion process really with Christ, himself and others that, of necessity is ongoing and relational, founded on and sustained throughout the POSTCURSILLO.

“It is during the adventure of the 4th Day that he will come to perfect this conversion and have a chance to become a Christian, to become Christ, in theological terms.

“It is for this reason that the POSTCURSILLO is designed to facilitate the nurturing of those three essential encounters that took place on the Cursillo so they grow and develop into true friendship – friendship of the person with himself, with Christ, and with his brothers and sisters in Christ.

“There is no doubt that the key to this process of friendship building is the last encounter – friendship with others. Here we mean not only the “others” that encompass “all”, but especially the friendship with those who are intimately involved in our conversion process, those in our Group Reunions and Ultreya.

Friendship is the key to the Postcursillo. When friendship develops between two people who share the conviction that Christ, who dwells in both of them, gives meaning to their lives, past, present and future, then a new dimension is attained that is transcendent – resulting in an active, conscious, and growing perception of their integration with and in Christ, which becomes a natural and inevitable part of their self-identity.

It is in this reality that allows man to find, assert, and orient the direction of his life – not only is he himself “essential,” but he also comes to know who he truly is in relation to other things and other people.

He realizes both his true identity as a child of God in the family of God and the humble dignity that ensues from this transcendent reality, compelling and propelling him on his journey of conversion, reinforcing his courage to “stay the course.”

From this understanding of his true identity, the person who is on the journey comes to realize that he is the only one who can, in truth, influence his particular and unique place in all the environments he finds himself in. Furthermore, and because his conversion is normal and natural, his influence is neither contrived nor forced, but occurs in an almost effortless manner that is normal, natural and harmonious.

“Our experience shows us that knowing and acting do not necessarily imply, or lead to, LOVING. However, we do hold that LOVING does lead to knowing and acting. There is no better way to facilitate LOVE in this day and age than by combining the love of human friendships with the transcendence of God’s love manifested in, and fostered by, friends who are also in the process of, and committed to, becoming Christians “The challenges that the world presents to the man and woman of today have the same root as they always did; the absence of God in the mind and in the heart of man.

“This is why the solution is always the same. The solution is Christ and his Grace, which is the only thing that can give him the feeling of being alive and of leading a meaningful life.”

Cursillo is about making it easier for those who have wandered away to come back to the Father. To love a person in the truest sense of the word is to wish for that person eternal possession of God and lead him or her to it. It seeks for them, through the means of the Movement, to bring them to actually live their lives in friendship with God and with themselves through a lifelong friendship with their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Declares,  
Dennis Coates

## \$1 Campaign

*The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement*, a text that has proven invaluable in defining what the Cursillo is intended to be, is in the process of being revised. This revision is an essential step in firmly rooting the Cursillo in its foundational charism and in its early history and development under the guidance of its founder Eduardo Bonnín.

The Global Cursillo Organization, the OMCC, has created a committee charged with this great work. It consists of 12 individuals, 3 from each of the 4 International Groups. There is also a subcommittee of 4 persons, one from each International Group, who are charged with the task of preparing a revised text that the group of 12 and the OMCC president will refine into a manuscript that all can support.

We cannot overstate the importance of this work to the Cursillo. Funds are needed to cover the travel of members to and from meetings and for ancillary expenses such as translations, accommodations, communications, and other expenses associated with a task of this magnitude.

The money to bring these individuals together from Australia, Canada, the United States of America, Spain, Germany, Venezuela, Brazil, and Korea must come from the 4 international groups. We are recommending a simple yet ingenious plan to produce this financial support. It is the *Dollar Funding Campaign*. A similar campaign will likely run in each of the 4 International Groups. (Asia Pacific has already completed their campaign with great success).

This fundraising campaign is very simple. Collect \$1 from as many Cursillistas as possible.

To donate, please attend one of the Ultreyas, the Archdiocesan Ultreya, or simply pass your donation on to someone who is attending. Local Ultreya leaders will collect the donations, which will be sent to the Toronto Secretariat to be presented to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Cursillos.

## 2008 EVENTS/DATES

**Day of Reflection on Commitment:** Saturday Sept 6. Location/Time: please check [www.cursillotoronto.com](http://www.cursillotoronto.com), and your local Ultreya for updates

**Commitment Celebration:** Monday Sept 15. Location/Time: Blessed Trinity Church, 3220 Bayview Ave., Toronto.

**Leaders' School - Fall Semester:** Sept 22, 23; Oct 6, 20, 27; Nov 3, 10.

**Moonlight Retreat:** Monday Nov. 17, 7:30pm, Consolata Missionaries, 2671 Islington Avenue, Toronto.

**Cursillo Weekends:** Men's Nov 20-23; Women's Dec 4-7. Closings at 5pm Sunday. Consolata Missionaries, 2671 Islington Avenue, Toronto.

**Archdiocesan Ultreya:** Dec 11. Location: TBD