

# The TRIPOD

February

Newsletter of the Seattle Archdiocese Cursillo Movement

2004

## Our Cursillo Experience

By Steve and Eileen Louthain

### Steve's Weekend:

This is the story of my conversion. I've been a Catholic all my life, so it seems strange to tell a story about my conversion, but that's exactly what happened beginning with my Cursillo weekend in October 2003. For the first 39 years of my life, I was comfortable as a Catholic. As an adult, I enjoyed the community feeling I got from church, I appreciated the "love thy neighbor" teaching of the church, and I knew it was the right thing for my family.

For many reasons I avoided experiencing the church at a deeper level. I felt that I lacked the blind faith necessary to be a heartfelt believer. I wanted PROOF that Jesus was the son of God and that he rose from the dead! I wanted that proof, but at the same time I felt that it was wrong for me to seek out proof. I was just supposed to believe, wasn't I? I felt ignorant of the Bible and of the church's teachings, and could not see a path for gaining the knowledge I was seeking. I felt like I was at a dead end with no clear path to help me experience the church at the deeper level I longed for. I also felt trapped by my commitments as a father, husband, homeowner, and professional. I needed time in order to experience the church at a deeper level, and I didn't have a spare second (or so I thought).

I had heard about Cursillo four or five years ago and was interested but I decided my other priorities were too important. The Holy Spirit must have been at work because my interest passed through the St. Brendan Parish grapevine and last summer I had a sponsor in Bill Hinrichs. It took me weeks to "commit" to going on the weekend, but I did. Then, just one week before the Cursillo I panicked. Did I really want to get involved with a group of touchy-feely men on a weekly basis? Bill allowed me to make my own decision, and supported me either way. I finally decided that real change takes radical action. For me, a 3-day retreat at a kids' summer camp facility was about as radical as I could imagine.

I was shocked and overwhelmed by the outpouring of love from my fellow-Cursillista brothers, and from the community. I was struck by the great joy that Jesus' love can bring to us as humans. The weekend taught me that it is my responsibility as a husband, father and citizen to spread the love of Jesus. Rather than cringing at the thought of another responsibility, I was looking forward to putting this responsibility into action.

My return home was filled with excitement and anxiety. I wasn't sure what Eileen's reaction would be. Would she become an obstacle to the changes I wanted to make in our family?

### Eileen's Weekend:

I didn't encourage Steve to attend the weekend, mostly because I wasn't looking forward to being a single parent for three-and-a-half days. I didn't discourage him either, because I had been to some wonderful retreats and was hoping the Cursillo weekend would be good for Steve. However, I did have some misgivings. The Cursillo weekend seemed secretive and mysterious. Why did Steve's sponsor have to drive him to and from the weekend? I had heard of other men's retreats where it was rumored that men danced around naked beating drums. I imagined Steve trapped with a group of radical men, enduring a torturous weekend. Or worse yet, he would embrace some strange cult-like sect of Catholicism. My imagination didn't run too wild though, because I knew the people who introduced Steve to Cursillo to be grounded Catholics whom I respected.

Unaware of the purpose for the men's weekend preceding the women's weekend, I decided to put off attending the Cursillo weekend until the next year. Steve could be my guinea pig—if it were a torturous weekend I would just not go the next year. The evening Steve was to arrive home I planned on getting rid of Bill (his sponsor) as soon as possible so I would get the real scoop. I suspected it was either a great or terrible experience. Within 30 seconds of Steve's walking through the door I knew he was a changed man. He looked wiped out, yet exuded such peace and incredible joy that he actually looked different

than I had ever seen him before. Through his physical fatigue, he was bursting with excitement. It was then that I knew I had to attend the women's weekend. I had a strong feeling I needed to experience what Steve had experienced first-hand, so we could together, as a team, make the changes in our household that Steve was compelled to make. I needed to be on the same spiritual page if I were to understand him.

I had no doubt in my mind that God wanted me on the next weekend. And, He would make it happen despite the fact that I was scheduled to work the next weekend.

The most powerful experience of my Cursillo was the magnificent feeling of love I felt—God's love for me, and my love for my sisters and brothers in Christ. It enabled me to move beyond an intellectual understanding of a relationship with Christ, to an emotional, binding and all-encompassing relationship with Him. I was in tears many times throughout the weekend. I was especially moved during the mass at the conclusion: amazed at the beauty and miracle of the Eucharist—something my parents had tried to explain to me, and I now finally experienced for myself.

#### **After the Weekend - Steve:**

I have found that the group reunion is one of the highlights of my week. I appreciate this group of men ministering to each other. What a gift it is to encourage and support each other in our spiritual growth. My goals as a man seem more achievable now that I'm able to discuss them with other men, and receive the support and encouragement of these men. The inspiration I received during and following the Cursillo weekend have encouraged me to make prayer and religious study a part of my day. Miraculously, what seemed so impossible before, seems so simple now. I really do have time to pray, read scripture, and immerse myself in an exciting book about our faith.

I now feel like a true heartfelt believer. The Cursillo weekend provided me with the toolbox necessary to really experience the church. I now have the proof I was seeking. For me the proof is in the perfection of Jesus, and in Him establishing the one true universal church.

#### **After the Weekend - Eileen:**

I was inspired by the witness of the speakers on the Cursillo weekend. Books on religion seemed boring and unimportant before, and now I find them fascinating and essential. I felt a real calling to

minister to others. I mentioned to Father John Shaw that I felt called to become involved in the Catholic Engaged Encounter. Within 24 hours following the women's weekend, Fr. John hooked us up with Greg and Kathy Dunn, the coordinators of the Seattle Engaged Encounter. We have met with them, and are anxiously awaiting our first training weekend in March.

#### **Family Life Now:**

Bringing Christ into the center of our family was the major focus after our weekends. With preteen and young teenage children, we expected great resistance to change. In fact, once we pull them away from their many distractions, primarily electronic in nature, the kids have been very receptive. When we have a nighttime prayer, rosary or discussion, they actually seem happy and excited to make God a part of their day. They all describe our family as more peaceful now than before Cursillo. Now that has been a welcome miracle!

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## **Coming Events**

By Dick Hassell

**Regional Meeting:** March 26-28, 2004  
Lewiston, Idaho

**National Encounter:** July 29–August 1, 2004  
Seattle University

#### **Cursillo Weekends '04, '05**

Currently we are focusing our energy and time on the 2004 National Encounter here in Seattle, but we should not lose sight of upcoming Cursillo weekends in the fall of 2004 and Spring of 2005. The new weekend cost for every one is \$100. As you know, circumstances will always dictate what is freely donated.

#### **Fall 2004 Weekends at Camp Don Bosco**

Men's – Oct 14-17

Women's – Oct 21-24

#### **Spring 2005 Weekends at the Palisades**

Men's – Apr 7-10

Women's – Apr 14-17

Everyone who has participated, either as a team member or candidate, in our past three successful weekends, will attest to the Holy Spirit as a major

factor and guiding force. Great enthusiasm and spirituality became the keynote of these weekends. At this time we must continue to work on the growth of the Cursillo Movement in our area. The need to bring Jesus Christ to every living soul is important. As we work through the Holy Spirit we will not only be changing our environment but the environment of the whole world.

One thing I'd like to stress, there are a lot of people who would like to work a weekend, but there just aren't many positions on the teams available. YET you can still be a team member by going out and bringing candidates to the weekend. Our ability to fill the weekend depends on you—searching for new and future leaders of the Cursillo Movement.

May the Holy Spirit be with you.

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## Message from Lay Director

By Pete Jancola

Hiking through the Pacific Northwest forests I often encounter “dead” trees. There are no branches, the bark is mostly peeled away, and rotting parts are quite visible. But the tree is still standing. I know this is part of God's plan for the unfolding of creation, but recently a new thought popped into my head. Is this “dead” tree just standing there waiting to fall over in the near future? It struck me that God does not wait for anything, in the sense that nothing is happening until the awaited event occurs. In the current situation, I believe, a lot is going on that may be invisible to, or even beyond the comprehension of, human observers. That “dead” tree is not just standing there! Right up to the moment it falls (and even afterward) there is a lot happening within it and within its sphere of influence. If I look closely, I can see evidence of some of those things, such as the little woodpecker holes and patches of moss or strands of lichen. And this doesn't even touch upon the invisible activities and those beyond my comprehension! I want to put up a sign next to that tree saying, “God working!” There is a parallel, I think, regarding human beings and the situations that are part of our daily life.

The elderly person in a nursing home is not “just waiting to die”, and the prisoner is not just serving time, waiting to be released. We are not just waiting

for a new job, a raise in salary, a new home, graduation, or a cancer to be cured. In each of these situations there could be a “God working” sign. When I see the hard work and the enthusiasm of our Encounter team, the Secretariat, the Schools of Leaders, and the January St. Philomena Ultreya and West Sound Grand Ultreya, I want to put up the redundant sign, “God and Spirit working!” Oh, how I've come to pray for the Grace to see how God is working at every little moment in my life! For one thing, I feel honored and thankful to be around such people who are obviously working along with God, though I'm sure they would admit that God is doing most of the work.

If a “dead” tree can so enliven my spirit and expand my comprehension of God's work, there is hope for every thing and every person to do the same! See you at Ultreya! God is with you – more than you realize!

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## National Encounter

Here is a brief description of the various activities we are preparing to do to host the 2004 National Encounter at Seattle University July 29 to August 1. The names of the coordinators are included so that if you find an activity to your liking and availability you can volunteer to help. We need people to support these tasks, and those who do so can easily attend the Encounter sessions as well (although there is no requirement to attend).

**Transportation:** Ray Grothe, 360-455-1768, rayg77@comcast.net

(Wed. July 28) Meet Nat'l Secretariat members (approx. 25) at airport; drive them to Seattle U.

(Thurs. July 29) Transport people (arriving as early as 10:00am and extending to midnight, or until the last person arrives) from the airport to the Registration Desk at Seattle U.

Establish a staffed gathering point at the airport.

(Sat. night, July 31 and Sun. morning, Aug. 1) Transport people from Seattle U. to the airport.

**Registration:** Michele Raymond, 206-363-6394, gmraymond2@comcast.net

Set up the registration tables at Seattle University, in the lobby of the Champion Tower dorm.

(July 29, afternoon and evening) Register each participant, distribute handout material, and direct them to the University staff desk where they pick up room keys.

Be prepared to register Spanish-speaking participants as well.

**Music:** Pat Lund, 360-734-4299,  
lundslanding@earthlink.net

Form a Music Group of English and Spanish speaking musicians/singers for liturgy functions (daily morning/night prayers, Fri. & Sat. Masses), and for other events such as Ultreya.

Accommodate Encounter attendees who bring their musical instruments and want to join in.

**Sacristan:** Joe Dunne, 206-933-2845,  
jeanandjoe@earthlink.net

Ensure supplies (wine, hosts, chalices, patens, Lectern Book, Sacramentary, etc) are available 2-3 days prior to start of the Encounter. Ensure at least one set of vestments (ideally 3 or more sets) is available for the Nat'l Episcopal Advisor and other guests.

Understand the lights, sound system, etc in liturgy room. Ensure sufficient seating on platform for Mass. Decorate platform area with appropriate banners, flowers, etc. Work with University Liturgy Person on room and arrangements for Palanca Chapel.

**Equipment and Recording:** Tanguy Martin,  
tmartin@waedfoundation.org

Obtain appropriate Audio/Visual equipment (from Seattle U & elsewhere). Provide audio recording of workshops and major presentations. Generate copies of audio tapes/cds for sales by late Saturday afternoon.

**Sales of Cursillo Literature, etc.:** Ron Fernandes,  
425-821-3599, ferpl@aol.com

Provide four people for each shift (meal times) Thursday evening through Saturday evening.

**Hospitality:** Noreen Millbauer, 360-437-7649,  
dmnr@cablespeed.com

Greet each participant as they arrive for registration, and assist them with luggage. Once registered, assist them in locating dorm rooms.

Staff an Information Booth during daytime hours throughout the Encounter.

**Fiesta:** Harriet Hamerly, 206-782-1676,  
hjhamerly71@hotmail.com

Arrange for a fiesta Saturday evening.

## A Forgotten Gift

By Oscar Bolliga

One Day at our Ultreya in Lincoln City, Oregon at St. Augustine Parish our guitarist/singer and leader of our music group, Mike Donovan asked if anyone played and instrument. The group was going to need help. He was building a new house and had to take a year off from the group to complete it. With Mike gone, that would leave only Eric Seaman and the flutist to carry on. I looked around at the twenty people present; no one stood up or raised their hand. Very tentatively I raised mine (I still don't know why.). Mike asked, "What do you play?" I told him that sixty years ago I played the harmonica.

In 1936 at the age of ten I was taught to play the harmonica in the fourth grade for a PTA program. The harmonica was a Hohner in the key of C. It cost \$0.25. The fancy ones cost a \$1.00. After the program I retired from playing the instrument in public. I did, however, play funny songs for my six kids. They enjoyed it and we all had a good time laughing and singing.

Mike asked if I still had a harmonica. I told him I had a 45-year old one hanging around the house and he invited me to bring the instrument to the next Ultreya.

I now play regularly at ultreyas, at some regional meetings, and here at Garibaldi every Friday. Since my second debut (six to seven years ago) I have learned a sack full of songs in all of the major keys. Playing the instrument has been a blessing for me. I especially like to play in the company of other musicians. Pat Lund has given me permission to play at the National Encounter.

(Editor's Note: Oscar also keeps busy with other activities: He catches moles for farmers and some town folks. The fees for this service, Oscar says, keeps him in harmonicas and will pay for his trip up here to the National Encounter if he can come. He must find someone to stay with his wife while he is away.)

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*Cursillo = Short Course, Long Commitment*

## Palanca Request

By Pete Jancola

This is a request for Palanca for the people from across the Country who will be coming here in July to attend the National Encounter. They are our sisters and brothers in Christ, and our fellow Cursillistas. We want to pray for them, and to let them know of our love and concern for them.

We are requesting group Palanca, from Schools of Leaders, Ultreyas, and Group Reunions, as well as Palanca from individuals. It may be in the form of e-mails, letters, posters, cards, anything that demonstrates our prayers and sacrifices for the attendees. Please mail the Palanca to Pete Jancola at "pjjancola@worldnet.att.net" or at

9817 NE Murden Cove Drive  
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110-3380

Thank you. Please don't put this off. Do it now!

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## Web Site Under Construction

A Web site is being constructed to for the Seattle Archdiocese Cursillo Movement, hopefully completed by March 1, 2004. The site will provide Cursillistas and all interested people information about the activities of the Movement in Seattle and important news from the National Organization. You will be able to access information about up coming weekends, contact information, key people with in the organization, other Cursillo Web sites, and much more. Register at the Web site:

[www.seattlecursillo.org](http://www.seattlecursillo.org)

We spend about \$2,800 a year to mail 5000 print ed copies of The TRIPOD. With the Web site, we will be able to send electronic copies at virtually no cost. Using the Internet will help us to keep expenses down. So, please go to [www.seattlecursillo.org](http://www.seattlecursillo.org) and register today to receive The TRIPOD. Registrants will receive their copy by email starting with the May issue.

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## Secretariat Members

Pete Jancola, Lay Director, 206-780-5813,  
pjjancola@worldnet.att.net

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425-865-0257, davehallek@aol.com

Jerry Hyde, Poulsbo School of Leaders Facilitator,  
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Michele Raymond, Secretary, 206-363-6394,  
gmrayment2@comcast.net

Susan Holliday, Treasurer, 425-228-4555,  
pineconeinc@yahoo.com

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## Ultreyas

**Bothell:** "Northend" St. Brendan, 2nd Saturday  
8:00PM. Contact: Sam Affronte, 425-481-5296

**Bremerton:** Holy Trinity, 4th Thursday, 7:00PM.  
Contact: Jerry Hyde, 360-377-9335

**Des Moines:** St. Philomena, 3rd Tuesday, 7:00PM.  
Contact: Marilyn Soderquist, 206-248-2063

**Lacey:** Sacred Heart, 3rd Sunday, 1:30PM. Contact:  
Tom Connors, 360-491-7401

**Montesano** St. John's Mission, 2nd Sunday, 2:00PM.  
Contact: Helen Pellegrino, 360-249-5535

**Poulsbo** St. Olaf. 3rd Monday, 7:00PM Contact:  
Noreen Millbauer, 360-437-7649

**Tacoma** St. John of the Woods, 1st Wednesday  
7:00PM. Contact: Earl Ducote, 253-845-0112

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## Ideals

By Philip Auth

I've probably worked on 90 Cursillo Weekends in my 27 years in the movement. I shed a few tears of joy at every one of them. All except the first Cursillo, the one I made.

They wanted my heart, and I wouldn't give it to them. Stoically I was able to resist all of their attempts to reach me. The great food, the sleep deprivation, the silly songs, the flowers, the well wishing in the palanca letters, their attempts to befriend me. I was tempted, but I stubbornly refused.

I trusted the message, if not the messengers. As I studied and restudied my notes after the weekend, I saw the compelling message of Cursillo, and felt it was the truth. It resonated deep within my soul. If Jesus himself had taught the weekend, it would not have been truer. But was it possible to live as the rollos suggested? As I recounted their witness stories in my mind I found them flawed and thin.

I would have probably bagged the weekend except for one man--the rector. Many times through the weekend he looked at me. Rather he looked through me. His eyes were penetrating. They seemed to be asking something and his faint smile indicated he had found his answer.

Because of his influence, I started attending weekly ultreyas, where I watched my would-be mentors. Were they real? Well, they showed up to ultreyas, which told me they were serious. I listened to them and watched. If this Cursillo thing was real, it was going to change my whole life, and for that to happen I needed to know that these men were authentic.

I began to see their flaws, their shortcomings. Do flaws and shortcomings debunk authenticity? I could see they were men of faith. There was no denying that. It was in their witness talks that I heard and saw the faint glimmer of something I didn't have--the ability to speak from the heart. They weren't simply preaching and teaching pious platitudes. I persevered for several months faithfully coming to meetings, even when I didn't want to go.

Finally, I came to a crossroads. I had to put my heart on the table, or cut and run. I prayed passionately. I wanted to believe. Reason took me to the edge of the

cliff of faith, but it could not make me jump. That I needed to do freely. The motivation came to me in a mental whisper, "your brothers are not perfect, far from it, but they're doing their best to serve me." With that prompting I jumped and cried on the way down. It was rather like when I was married. I took a leap of faith in a person.

Since that leap there has been anger, heartache, disappointment, and doubt. However, that has been exceeded by the joy and peace that comes about by my progressive conversion as I have rubbed up against the other folks in the movement locally, across the Northwest, and indeed across the USA. I'm truly grateful I stayed the course, right down to my socks.

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## Registration Form for National Encounter

Seattle, WA

July 29-August 1, 2004

Registration form is available online at:  
[www.seattlecursillo.org/encounter.pdf](http://www.seattlecursillo.org/encounter.pdf)

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## Feedback

**Your Feedback, please:**

What kind of information and articles would you like to read? We want your ideas on how we can make the TRIPOD more interesting and useful. Also, would you consider writing an article for the TRIPOD? Have you read a book lately that you would like to recommend? Do you have a witness story you'd like to share? Have you had a close moment that was especially inspiring? Do you know of some coming events that other Cursillistas might be interested in? Please take the time to send us your comments and recommendations.

**Send feedback to:**

Seattle Cursillo Movement  
 P. O. Box 68803  
 Seattle, WA. 98168-0803

**For Information:** Call: 206-780-5813

Send your comments to Ron Fernandes, 13832  
 119 Ave NE, Kirkland, WA 98034, or call 425-  
 821-3599 email: [Ferpl@AOL.com](mailto:Ferpl@AOL.com)

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