

Cursillo THE ARK

Toledo Diocesan Cursillo Mission Statement: Cursillo is a Catholic Lay Movement embraced by the Diocese of Toledo to bring hearts closer to Jesus Christ in order to transform society and be of service to the whole church. It is our mission to form small Christian Communities to deepen Spirituality in ourselves and in others.

March 2021

Application Forms are on the Website: www.cursillo419.org

Spiritual Advisor	Page 1
Lay Director	Page 2
Pre-Cursillo	Page 3
Cursillo	Page 4
School of Leaders	Page 5
Fourth Day	Page 6
Prayer Vine	Page 7
Secretariat	Page 7
Ultreya	Page 8
Palanca	Page 9

Upcoming Cursillo Weekends

Men's September 16-19, 2021

Women's October 14-17, 2021

**Please share how
Christ is working in
your life.**

**Email
Nancy Cook at
nancy750@bex.net**

Dear Lenten Companions,

On Ash Wednesday I received this blessing written by Jan Richardson. I want to share it with you because it's still early enough in Lent to be meaningful and I want you to feel the power of its blessing also.

A Blessing for Ash Wednesday

To receive this blessing, all you have to do is let your heart break. Let it crack open.

Let it fall apart so that you can see its secret chambers,
the hidden spaces where you have hesitated to go.

Your entire life is here, inscribed whole upon your heart's walls:
every path taken or left behind every face you turned toward or turned
away,
every word spoken in love or in rage,
every line of your life you would prefer to leave in shadow,
every story that shimmers with treasures known and those you have yet
to find.

It could take you days to wander these rooms. Forty at least.
And so, let this be a season for wandering, for trusting the breaking,
for tracing the rupture that will return you to the One who waits,
who watches, who works within the rending to make your heart whole.

It was that opening line that grabbed me. "Let your heart break." I bowed my head, closed my eyes and prayed, "Oh no, not again! Is that the call of Lent? I know I've grown lax with self-discipline and I've already decided to do something about that, but another broken heart?? Please, not that! I'm really trying to control my tendency to judge people who think, act or live differently than I do. And then there are the ongoing disappointments and sacrifices imposed by COVID for a whole year already. Isn't that enough?"

I suspect everyone reading this letter has made some sincere resolution for Lent. For some of us Lent becomes an endurance test, "Can I make it 6 weeks without my favorite ___?" Some, like me, need self-discipline, whether they've fallen into a lazy or unkind habit, or have slipped

away from a regular time of daily prayer or Scripture reading, or gotten undisciplined in their eating or drinking habits. Lent (the word comes from the Old English "lente" meaning "spring") is a good time to do some physical and spiritual housecleaning. Those are all good suggestions for this season.

But Jan Richardson is blessing us with something more: a heart cracked open so we "walk around inside" and discover more about ourselves – good and bad. All the great saints and classic spiritual writers insist that self-knowledge is the foundation upon which holiness grows. That's because it leads us to a profound sense of our need for conversion as we discover the deep-down hidden parts of ourselves that we would just as soon hide or ignore. Ah, yes, allowing our hearts to be cracked open demands humility and vulnerability, not values we usually joyfully embrace, but that's exactly where God wants to meet us.

"A contrite, humble heart, O God, you will not spurn." Ps. 51:17.

Can we come humbly and vulnerably before God this Lent, with all our gifts and with all our limitations and brokenness, and with utter honesty lay our heart open to the transforming power of our merciful God? This act of trust makes God smile, the God who is the divine physician, the expert in healing and making whole. All it takes, as Jan Richardson says, "is to let your heart break."

Many blessings on your continued Lenten journey!
Sr. Edna

Lay Director

(Each month one of our Lay Director's will write an article)

Happy Lent!

Sister Edna Michel introduced me to that expression, and it confused me. Lent is a time for fasting, abstinence, introspection (YIKES!), repentance, ... All of these can be difficult to embrace.

When I take the time to look at these "opportunities" for Lent, it becomes clearer that these practices, perhaps different from my everyday life, can help me to be happier, to live my life more fully.

When I fast, not just as prescribed for Ash Wednesdays and Good Fridays, but in other ways too, such as fasting from behavior that isn't peacemaking, I will have a happier Lent. If I can hold on to this way of life, that happiness will continue!

When I abstain, not just as prescribed for Fridays in Lent, but in other ways too, such as abstaining from the need to have the last word, I will have a happier Lent. If I can hold on to this way of life, that happiness will continue!

Introspection can be challenging (and disconcerting). I watched an online Lenten Mission recently that encouraged the listeners to remember that we are good, and that God has JOY in us, that He LOVES us. The speaker also said that going to the sacrament of Reconciliation is a joyful time. Huh? She said that since we know that we are good, we also know when we have veered from the path of goodness. I can live happier if I fully embrace that I am God's beloved child, one of His MANY favorites, that I am good.

What opportunities (yes, they are opportunities) await you this Lent? It's not too late!! I have chosen some behaviors/habits in my life where some fasting and abstinence would help me to live a more joy-filled life.

I'm not exactly having an easy time, but I know that the benefits of working on them will bear much fruit.
Happy Lent!

Your sister and brother in Christ,

Kathy Otermat John Lyons

John Lyons
lyons5876@gmail.com

Kathy Otermat
kotermat04@gmail.com

Pre-Cursillo

When you think about prayer, what comes to mind? As Cursillistas, we all know the importance of prayer in our lives. But do we make prayer a priority? How do we refer to prayer: do we say 'I need to say my prayers' or 'I need to do my prayers' when we talk about needing to pray?

As Lent has begun, these are some of the thoughts that I have had. Am I taking the time that I need to pray, or am I just rushing through to 'get it done'? Am I staying focused on my prayer, or thinking about all I have to do that day? Am I just 'saying' or 'doing' my prayers rather than truly being focused on the Lord and what He is telling me?

In the last week, this has come more to light through a discussion with Dad, and a homily that one of the priests in my parish gave. If I just 'say' or 'do' my prayers, am I really giving myself over to the prayer? If I rush through my prayers, am I giving the Lord the consideration he needs from me? Am I opening my heart and mind to God's will for me? Am I taking what I have heard God telling me in prayer, and let it shine through for others to see? The questions could go on, but I think you have the idea.

What are some of the resources that we need to have a fruitful prayer life? There are many options, and you have to find the ones best suited to you. Some of the things that I use during my prayer time include: The Word Among Us, the rosary, going to mass as often as I can, adoration, different prayers, and so on. I also have a special corner of my bedroom that I only use for prayer. This helps me to focus on prayer as well. Finding what works for you may take some time, and it may change as you grow in prayer. Being open to hearing God's word is most important.

As we continue to journey through Lent, may you find peace and happiness in all that you do as you continue to deepen your prayer life.

MaryAnn Hohman
Pre-Cursillo Chairperson

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Make a Friend – Be A Friend – Bring a Friend to Christ

Cursillo

Dear Friends,

We continue to hope that we can begin to plan for the next Cursillo weekends very soon. It was delightful to hear and see some of you via our Zoom Ultreya last month! At the moment there is nothing new and exciting for us to report; so, we will subject you to our musings instead...

Recently my beautiful friend, Mary, celebrated her birthday. I think she turned 80; but it doesn't really matter in heaven! She wasn't a big fan of cake, so on her birthday I always made her chocolate chip cookies. Now I have Mass for her. While I was praying for her and thinking about her at Mass that morning; something occurred to me that never consciously had before. ***Every Mass intention is a love story.*** The names we hear in the Prayers of the Faithful aren't just random names the secretary typed in to fill up space. (Not implying that we would ever do that.) They are names of people who are dearly loved and greatly missed. Someone deliberately took the time to have Mass offered for their souls and there are people in the congregation waiting to hear those beloved names spoken. When a person comes into the parish office to ask for a Mass offering, it doesn't take much prodding to have them share about their beloved deceased. Sometimes there are tears. Sometimes there are chuckles! Since that morning during Mass, however, I listen differently. Each intention is a love story.

It made me think of others for whom I've had Mass in the last few months. My sister, Maggie. In our family Maggie will never be just a story. She is a LEGEND! My brother, Dan, who thought he was an atheist. We discussed it a lot; but, in love, agreed to disagree. Shortly before he died, however, I told him how awesome it was going to be for him when he found out that I WAS RIGHT! My nephew, Tom. A decorated Iraqi war veteran. Proud firefighter. A kind, loving, wounded soul. My friend and brother in Christ, Tim. Tim's story is more of a book! My friend, Bob, Mary's husband. Bob taught my sons "righty-tighty - lefty-loosey". He also taught them how to make him a perfect Manhattan WAY before they were old enough to legally drink one! Bob had been a Franciscan brother in the Zimbabwe mission in Africa for many years before he and Mary met. Another legend! My mother who died of kidney disease at the age of 48. We were told she had developed diphtheria as a child, which left her frail the rest of her life. She was nine years old in **1918** when she got sick. Makes me wonder if she was a victim of **THAT** pandemic. My favorite cousin, Sharon. We had many great adventures as kids. (Some naughty! Some nice!) I could go on; as I'm sure most of you could, as well - remembering with great love the stories behind the names of our beloved dead.

It is a great gift to join with them within the Communion of Saints as we celebrate the Eucharist together and pray for one another in our respective domains. It seems so very personal to hear those names and know that each soul is unique; just as each love story is. And it seems like a much more beautiful gift than chocolate chip cookies!

Love and Prayers,
The Huffman's



School of Leaders...

As I was preparing my monthly article for the Ark, I happened across this little item that I used before. It was so appropriate at the time, I used it and found it even more appropriate today. So, I am using it in place of the article that I have written. (That's good. I will have a head start on next month this way. Always looking for the easier softer way you know.)

It's Lent and I want to share a little fasting idea from Pope Francis.

Fast from hurting words and say kind words.

Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.

Fast from anger and be filled with patience.

Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.

Fast from worries and have trust in God.

Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.

Fast from pressures and be prayerful.

Fast from bitterness and fill your heart with joy.

Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.

Fast from grudges and be reconciled.

Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

Lord, as we enter this Lenten season, give me the Grace I need to look at my priorities. Help me to honestly discern that which is the most fundamental and central driving motivation of my life. Help me to choose You above all else so that You will help everything in my life to become ordered in accord with Your holy will. Jesus, I trust in You. Amen.

Our next School of Leaders meeting will be held via Zoom on Sat. March 20, 2021, at 9:00 AM.

Scripture reading and reflection - Dale Fair.

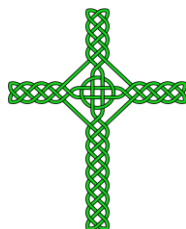
Spiritual Advisors presentation - Fr Ed Littellmann (Chapter 5 of "His Way" by Fr David Knight - available on Amazon and the National Cursillo website)

Lay presentation - John & Karen Reinhart (Chapter 6 of "The study of the Charism", OMCC - available on the National Cursillo website. www.natl-cursillo.org)

If you plan to attend this zoom meeting, please contact Karen Bonen via email at karenbonen@yahoo.com by Wed. March 17 with your email address. Invitations will be sent out with instructions on how to connect to the Zoom account on Thurs, March 18. While the Zoom approach isn't like being in person with one another, it is still a good way to be able to see one another and share our experience, strength, and hope. Hope to see you there.

May your Lenten fasting be filled with meaning and grace.

John & Karen Bonen, Rectors.



Fourth Day

Hello, my Sisters and Brothers in Christ.

We have started our Lenten Journey. It is a time of prayers, reflections, and other means of being close to Jesus. We gave a challenge last month for things to do. We hope that you can take some time in reaching out to fellow Cursillistas. What a gift that would be to hear from someone whom we haven't seen or talked to in some time. You have made a friend; You are a friend and You have brought the friend to Christ. Are you still doing these things??? I know I have to work harder at keeping Christ growing with friends. I have some very close friends in Christ, but I need to reach out more to others. I have worked a couple of weekends, but I know I haven't kept in contact with others that have worked with me. I do keep them in my prayer life, but not the social life. I hope I can do better with Jesus's help this Lenten season.

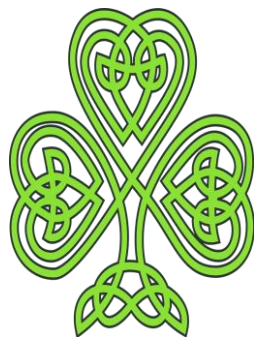
Our Pastor Fr. Speier had a good homily this past Sunday that touched me a lot. You know Lent comes every year. Some of us give up things for those 40 days or do extra things for 40 days. Then when Easter comes some of us stop doing or giving because Lent is over. Why do we stop? Why isn't it important anymore? I know I'm guilty of doing that. I think that's what Father put on my heart. Example like giving up sweets and things like that. Does our journey always start on Ash Wednesday and end on Easter? Saying or doing extra prayers or reaching out to others? What he said about prayer life hit me. You don't have to add it just these 40 days. You can take just 1 minute, 5 minutes, or more and add it to your life journey. That would be so wonderful!!!

Love,

The Welch's and the Reinhart's

Post Cursillo Team:

John and Karen Reinhart
John and Luanne Welch,
email: John4toledo@yahoo.com



Prayervine:

Mike & Joan Wise - Mike in hospital with congenital heart failure, Bob Drewior - cataract surgery, young mom struggling, Alex- drug addiction, Robert - Covid & passed away, good friend - Covid, thanksgiving for Mary Lou's successful back surgery, Mike Wise - home from hospital & continued recovery, fellow Cursillista - back surgery complications, Fred Herold - third back surgery, Melany Taylor - cancer surgery, Lori Kamelesky's husband, Mike - passed away, Judy Coven - passed away, Dennis Niedorkohr - passed away, a young couple - lost a baby, were expecting twins & one of the twins has died, Marilyn - blood clots in her lungs, two little boys facing surgery.

Please send your prayer requests to Jane Distel at

prayersaregoingup@gmail.com.



Secretariat Member openings

When we first went to the School of Leaders, we were so surprised at how comfortable we felt there. It felt like a 3-hour Cursillo weekend. (condensed version) We couldn't wait to go again the following month. Our love for SOL has grown immensely over the years. We were honored to serve as rector for the last 4 years. We have learned so much about our movement and have grown in our faith because of it. The School of Leaders is in need of new Rectors. Please take a moment and prayerfully consider this position within our movement.

John & Karen Bonen

Do you love our Cursillo movement? Do you feel called to be more involved? The School of Leaders is in need of new rectors starting in July 2021. Ask the Holy Spirit if this is something that you could do. Spend some time in prayer and see if this might work for you. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact John & Karen Bonen (karenbonen@yahoo.com) or call/text us at 419-563-5115. We have been blessed beyond measure!

Other openings happening in June, 2021

Pre-Cursillo

Post-Cursillo (4th day)

Hispanic Representative

Communications

Please reflect on these openings and hear the Holy Spirit to be the Hands, Feet and Voice of Jesus, you can continue to grow in your faith!



Diocesan Ultreya by Zoom Sunday, April 18th 2-4 PM

The Toledo Diocesan Cursillo Secretariat is inviting you to a virtual diocesan Ultreya!

We received so many positive comments after our first Virtual Ultreya on February 7th that we decided to have another. Please consider joining us to share faith, song, and friendship. While it's not like being together in person, it's a very good substitute until we can once more safely gather for those long awaited hugs!

1. You can join by computer, I-Pad, smartphone, Tablet or regular phone. If you are using a desktop computer, you will need a camera. Without it, you can join by phone only.
2. If you don't already have Zoom, you can download it for free at zoom.us. Click on download and then install. You will be asked a few questions: name, email, etc. You do not need to purchase anything! If you already have Zoom but haven't used it recently, click on zoom.us/update to get the most recent version.
3. Let John Lyons know you want to attend the virtual Ultreya: lyons5876@gmail.com
4. You will receive an invitation email from him a few days before the Ultreya with a link to join on Sunday (or a phone number, with the meeting number and passcode if you are joining by phone only).



See you soon!

*If you need help, contact
John Lyons*

Palanca

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Happy Lent! Is it happy? Or does this time of year create a sadness or stress in your heart? Have you set what you want to do for Lent and already failed a week into it? Or changed it up? Or better yet-gave up? Personally, this is my favorite time of the year. I like to think of it as a time of spiritual growth for myself. And what makes it easier to accomplish my Lenten devotion is because it is the Church season of Lent. If I try to do things at different times of the year- for example say a decade of the Rosary daily, fast between meals or perform some corporal works of charity in the “off season” (not Lenten season) I usually fail. But during this designated period of 40 days, I can stick to my guns – better (not perfectly, just better). I’m not sure why. Maybe because I know others are doing “Lenten-stuff” or because I know Easter (the joy of the Resurrection of Christ Jesus), and a new beginning, is right around the corner. I don’t know but I am glad I can accomplish it and become better for it- if only for a short time. I noticed too, that after the first week it is easier at fulfilling my devotion; it becomes more routine.

We are not made to be perfect and change is inevitable in our lives. And God doesn’t ask any more from us than what we can handle- and He knows how much that is. So, if you change your Lenten course that is OK. At least, hopefully, you are doing something to make yourself a better person, more Christ-like. But knowing that God still loves every effort you give to Him and His son, Jesus, that is what counts. Any growth is better than none. And it is never too late to start; or start over.

If you are still adding to your Lenten devotion list let me put in a request. Please include the upcoming March Cursillos to that list. Pray for our Brothers and Sisters in Christ around the globe, and the success for their Cursillo weekends, especially during this difficult time in our world. Maybe offering a weekly Stations of the Cross, or extra decade of the Rosary, some type of fast (from Candy Crush), or providing charity to an appropriate organization in their name. The list can go on. Let us build a “house of prayer”. Isaiah 56:7 says- “these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer... for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” We need to pray for our Cursillo’s all over our great world.

Peace and Happy Lent,

Jan Stainbrook

Start Date	End Date	Event	Location
3/4/2021	3/7/2021	Men's 74 (English)	Charleston, SC
3/19/2021	3/21/2021	Men's 456 (French)	Outaouais, Quebec (Canada)
3/18/2021	3/21/2021	Women's 19 (English)	Victoria, KS
3/25/2021	3/28/2021	Women's 109 (English)	Springfield/Cape Girardeau, MO

'What a shame it would be if someone came looking for Christ and only found us! But what a blessing if they came looking for us and found Christ!!'

Eduardo Bonnin, Founder Cursillo Movement

NATIONAL CURSILLO INFORMATION:

www.natl-cursillo.org Read about Cursillo news, palanca requests from around the world, or read the national newsletter.

CURSILLO WEBSITE: www.cursillo419.org Go here to view news of upcoming events, read the current month's Ark or download forms.

