

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.

February 2021

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

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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Who are we?

Here we are, in the beginning of February in the year 2021 with Lent just around the bend. How will our Mardi Gras experiences look this year? It was one of the last “normal” days of 2020 for me. I was able to celebrate that day with my sisters and Mercy associates at St. Bernardine Home. For their protection I have not been able to be there since. The following day I received ashes on my forehead alone with the rest of the Christian world. (Yes, not just Catholics ‘do’ ashes on Ash Wednesday) But by the Third Sunday of Lent our bishop was encouraging us to refrain from attending Mass in person and by the Fourth Sunday our Churches were closed. Something that had never happened as far as we could remember, ever! I remember thinking, ‘well, this gives new meaning to our Lenten fast!’ And thought how wonderful Easter would be when we could be back in our parishes to celebrate and receive Eucharist once again. It was a Holy Week and Easter like no other. And yet it was a time that was rich in the presence of our Suffering Jesus and our Risen Savior. Roman 8:38-39 came immediately to my heart: “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord “.

It was not Easter, but June last year before we were able to return to our parishes in a limited capacity, and for some of us with health issues we have still not been able to return. We have joined virtually thanks to Livestream and Facebook Live and Videos and have stayed connected because it is *who we are*. A pandemic cannot take us away from our God. It can separate us physically from one another, but it cannot separate us from our Christian communities because we are joined by so much more than the physical. Some of us have been sick, and some of our brothers and sisters have died. We have mourned them but have not been able to celebrate their lives as we would have in 2019. But still, we have celebrated their lives because that is *who we are*.

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**

Sometimes it is easy to focus on all the things we have missed or given up and are continuing to do so, because sisters and brothers, this pandemic is not over. But because of **whose we are**, I believe our God in inviting us to focus on all we have received in this past year. Take some time to look at the way you have grown through the challenges.

Find the gifts, maybe hidden deeply, but still there in the midst of the lock down, slow down, stay home, wear masks, keep distance and wash your hands. The gifts are there in the creative ways we have discovered to be in relationship even from a distance. The gifts are there in the ways we have reached out to one another through phone calls, and Facetime and emails and cards and letters and drive by celebrations. The gifts are there in the ways our parishes have continued to minister in the midst of it all and provide prayer and care for all of us. The gifts are there. So, let this be our prayer in this year 2021... Open our eyes, our ears and our hearts Lord that we may see your face, and hear your voice, and love like you, no matter what this year will bring as we continue this journey together through Lent and beyond. Because that is **who we are!**

De Colores!
Sr. Wanda

From the desk of Fr. Jim Brown

Greetings in the name of Jesus our Lord my beloved sisters and brothers in Christ.

As we begin this second month of 2021 it feels very much like the last 12 months. While vaccinations are on the horizon for many of us, we are still masked, social distancing, washing hands and sanitizing everything in sight. And still complaining about it all. The month of February brings two events that we can reflect on: Valentine Day and Ash Wednesday and the Lenten Season.

If you've been in any store, large or small, they all look a lot like Target stores with the red displays of hearts, candy, flowers and cards and other enticements to remember the 14th as the day of Romance. While it is good to promote love and friendship, romance, and relationships it usually becomes as superficial as the advertising. And the day after...it is over.

Well, we have the opportunity to go much deeper in the meaning of the words, "I love you." It is much more than just a good feeling, but it means a commitment to the other from us. When we use these three little words, they can be very powerful for they mean that "I give myself to you; I'm here for you; I want you to become the best person that you are meant to be, even at my own expense." It is a sacrificial love, an 'agape' type of love that comes from God Himself.

St John writes of this in his first letter: *"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God loved us, we ought to love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us."* (1 John 4:7-12)

So, by our sacrificial love for others, we can be a sign and witness to God's love for and in this world that He created, sustains, and redeemed and sanctified. Now we know it is easy to love people who

love us, or who like us, or who even tolerate us, right, but what about the folks who are polar opposites from in their thinking, in their beliefs or in their politics. How do we go about loving them? I think the best way is to realize that God loves them and created them just as much as he does us. And that Jesus suffered and died for them just as he did for us. They just can't see it or believe it, but it is a truth that we know and have to share with them. By the power of the Holy Spirit may they see the light of God's love. We just show up and sow the seed. Reflecting on that kind of Love that Jesus lived, taught, and died for is what our LENT is all about. We begin with Ash Wednesday – I guess it will be different this year as the ashes will be sprinkled on our head rather than on the forehead. But it begins our 40-day retreat that is meant to help us reflect on our own humble beginnings as creatures of the earth and our baptism that elevated us to become children of the Father. We recognize our sinfulness and brokenness and yet God's everlasting love and covenant relationship with us. He calls us back to Himself. All of this is played out in the Passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus our Lord. So, February might be a short month, but it has a lot for us to think about, pray about and put into practice.

May you all be blessed, and may you BE a blessing to all you meet. Help put a smile on another's face (even if you can't see it because of the mask.)

Fr Jim

Lay Director

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

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

As we look around the corner, Valentine's Day is almost here. And what do we hear of most? Love. And we can love because God loved us first. Not the love that the world speaks about. But love that is defined in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 13, 1-13

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now, we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Let us love each other as Christ has loved us. He gave His life that we might live.

We live in some very challenging times. Filled with a lot of things that are not love.

God loved us first so that we can love others as He has loved us. Let's go fishing in the deep water to love others. Let's bring others to Christ, bring them back to the Catholic Church or to a closer relationship with our brother Christ.

As I contemplate Cursillo and what it has done in my life, how it has helped me to grow, I want to reach out to others that they might share in the love of God. How did I get closer? In part by considering frequently the questions at the end of the Ideal Rollo. How do I spend my free time? What pleases me most in life? What do I spend my money on? What do I think of most? And to know God, I need to spend time listening to Him. I need to seek Him out daily. Otherwise, my day goes sideways pretty quickly. Love. May God show you His love and may you show your love for Him by how you live your life.

Decolores!!! Ultreya!!!!

Your Brother and Sister in Christ,

John Lyons
lyons5876@gmail.com

Kathy Otermat
kotermat04@gmail.com

Pre-Cursillo

Here we are at the start of February. Where did January go? It sure seemed to go fast.

Last month, I wrote about trusting God to show us where he wants us. A couple of weeks ago, on the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time, we heard from the Gospel of Mark about Jesus calling the first disciples (Mark 1:14-20). What trust Peter, Andrew, James, and John must have had to leave everything behind, and not look back. Could you do that?

It's hard to believe, but I am coming to the end of my term as the Pre-Cursillo chairperson at the end of June this year. I have enjoyed serving the Cursillo movement for the last three years, but at the end of June, it will be time for me to do something else. At this time, I want to invite you to consider taking a position on the Cursillo Secretariat. When I took the position, I had to trust in where God was leading me. It has helped me to grow, and to get to know the Cursillo movement better. Responsibilities are of the Pre-Cursillo chairperson are:

- Receiving and processing the candidate and sponsor application before the weekends take place.
- Sending out invitations to the candidates and staying in contact with the sponsors.
- Being in contact with the rectors and assistant rectors as candidates are confirmed.
- Sending out the names of the candidates and sponsors before the weekends (usually to the Prayer Vine, but depending on the timing of the weekend, the names may also be listed in the ARK).
- Being rector of the sponsors Ultreya on Thursday night of the weekends.
- Having people and organizational skills.
- Having email as most communication is done through it.
- Writing a short article for the ARK each month.
- Attending Secretariat meetings each month.

It sounds like a lot of work, but it really isn't. We do work hard on Secretariat, but we also have a lot of fun. I am willing to work with the person who steps into this position.

If you are ready to trust in God's call, and be more involved in the Cursillo movement, this is a good way to do that. Please feel free to contact me if you, or someone you know, are interested. I would be more than happy to talk with you.

Have a Happy Valentine's Day, and a good start to Lent.

MaryAnn Hohman
Pre-Cursillo Chairperson

102 Oakley Meadow Lane
Tiffin, OH 44883
419-681-5892
mahohman59@gmail.com

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

Cursillo

It's February and winter is upon us as the snow is falling outside and I think of the many opportunities for prayer this month and our upcoming Ultreya this Sunday, February 7. I wrote a lovely article for this month's ARK however my computer has decided to act up! So, know that each and everyone of you are in our prayers and look for our article in March!

DeColores,
Mike and Kathy Hoffman

School of Leaders...

**To acquire wisdom is to love oneself; people who cherish understanding will prosper.
(Proverbs 19:8)**

Popular culture sends us a lot of messages about value and worth. In magazines, music, television shows, movies, sports, and any other form of entertainment, we are continually told that the respect we receive depends on the status we have - and that status is defined by wealth, style, or popular opinion. We not only begin to evaluate ourselves that way, we evaluate others that way too. If they don't work a certain kind of job, earn a certain level of income, dress a certain way, or have a lifestyle we envy, they probably aren't successful. And if they aren't successful, they aren't significant or worthy of our attention.

Real significance isn't defined by popular culture. In fact, culture often magnifies less significant things and minimizes truly significant things. If we follow trends and listen to opinions, we will be driven to seek significance in jobs that provide the status we want, income that provides the

possessions we want, and relationships that provide the security and influence we want. And we can spend our entire lives going down that path, trying to find true significance in things that can never provide it for us. We will always be running but never arriving.

The Bible tells us what true significance is, and it is not found in what we have, in the status we attain, or even in what we accomplish. It is found in knowing God, living faithfully for Him, loving Him and others, and doing whatever He has called us to do - even if it doesn't impress anyone else. It's about our identity in Him, not our achievements and possessions. We have worth not because of what we do and have, but because we are His children, and He chooses to love us. Our worth does not depend on us. Our worth is based on how He values us, and He values us simply because He made us, and we belong to Him.

Learn to see yourself as being valuable for who you are and learn to see others that way too. Until you see people the way God sees them, uniquely created with special gifts and abilities that the world may not recognize, you will sell them short. You need to see with His eyes, recognize true worth, and stop striving for unworthy goals.

Your mission is shaped by your values, and if your values are misplaced, you'll miss your true mission. Understand that status is fleeting and artificial. Pursue what's truly worthwhile!

Our next School of Leaders will be held on Saturday, February 20, 2021 @ 9:00 A.M. via ZOOM.

Bible reading/reflection: Terese Cherry

Spiritual Advisors presentation: Fr Jim Brown (Chapter 4 of His Way by Fr David Knight) (available on Amazon and the National Cursillo website)

Lay presentation: John Lyons (Chapter 5 of Charism of Cursillo) (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 Wednesday, February 17, 2021 with your email address. Invitations will be sent out with instructions on how to connect to the Zoom account on Thursday, February 18, 2021. 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 with each other. Hope to see you there.

In January, we had 25 participants. Hopefully, we will have even more in February. Please feel free to invite a friend to join us!

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!

God bless,
John and Karen Bonen, rectors

Fourth Day

De Colores 4th Day!

John 12:46 I have come as a light to shine in this world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark.

It seems like just yesterday, we were preparing for and celebrating Christmas and the birth of our Lord Jesus! Our light, the light of the world! Advent is a season of hope, waiting, joyful preparation, of LIGHT! As 4th Day, we challenge you to keep that light, your light, shining bright into the Lenten season.

Lent is a season of soul searching and repentance, prayer and fasting, spiritual preparation. We all give things up for Lent as a sign of sacrifice and fasting, and to test our self-discipline. It is also a time of waiting and preparation, piety. We generally add some Lenten study through devotions, Bible study and maybe simply some extra reading during this time. Now here's our challenge to you to do some action! Many if not all of us are staying away from crowds, working from home, watching Mass on our TV vs. going to church. We are trying to stay safe and healthy physically. However, this isn't helping keep us healthy emotionally, or psychologically and spiritually. We need each other and we need Christ, and we need to be Christ to one another by letting our light shine and shine BRIGHTLY!

Our challenge to you is to make part of your action, reaching out and lighting the lives of your family, neighbors, co-workers, doctors, mailmen, parish priest and so on during this Lenten season. Reach out to (3) people a week during Lent. Through a phone call, email, snail mail, text message, "drive by" visit honking your horns to let people know you're there outside their house, even if at a distance for now. Write down the names of those you've reached out to keep track of how many times you let your light shine and challenge each other. Keep each other accountable if you would like, especially if it helps spread the light of Christ even more than if you were doing it on your own. Send us some of your numbers and we may even put them in the March issue of the Ark.

Come on 4th Day! Let's go light our world!

The Welch's and the Reinhart's

Post Cursillo Team:

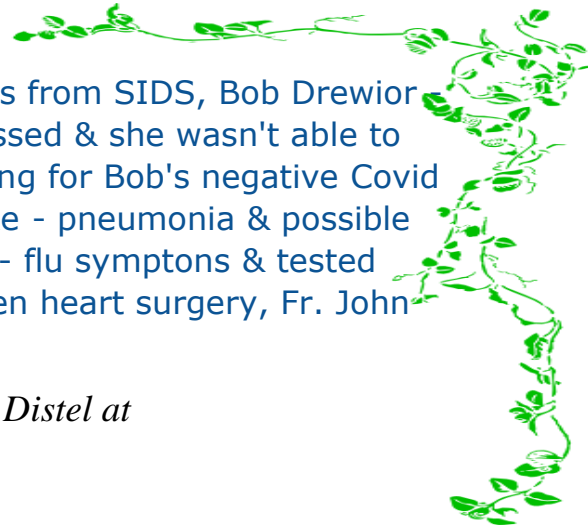
John and Karen Reinhart
John and Luanne Welch,
email: John4toledo@yahoo.com

Prayervine:

Gene Rospert - passed away, parents who had a baby pass from SIDS, Bob Drewior Covid test, blood test, cataract surgery, Amanda - dad passed & she wasn't able to be with him, Fr. Jim - tested positive for Covid, thanksgiving for Bob's negative Covid test, prayers of thanksgiving for Mike Wise doing well, Mike - pneumonia & possible cancer, Kricket - cancer surgery, Gary - diabetes, Jeremy - flu symptoms & tested positive for Covid, Bernie - Covid, Dennis Niedorkohr - open heart surgery, Fr. John Graden - passed away.

Please send your prayer requests to Jane Distel at

prayersaregoingup@gmail.com.

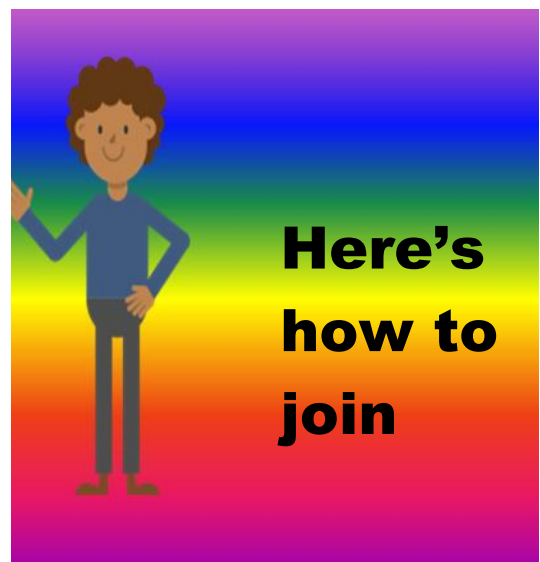




**Diocesan Ultreya by Zoom
Sunday, February 7
2-4 PM**

The Toledo Diocesan Cursillo Secretariat is inviting you to a virtual diocesan Ultreya! It's been nearly a year since we gathered in person for the men's weekend. While Secretariat and School of Leaders continues to meet via Zoom, we've missed so many of you and the good spirit engendered when we come together to sing, share faith and deepen friendships. We hope you'll choose to join us.

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*

Happy February,

February has always been known as the month of “love”. “Love” is mentioned in the Bible anywhere from 310 times to 550 times (and maybe more) depending on the Bible you read from. The Bible is all about love, even though Jesus only mentions it thirteen times.

There are different representations of love mentioned- romantic love, love between friends and siblings, self-sacrificing love (parental and Jesus’ passion) and the love of our God (John 3:16). All of these are created by God therefore these loves are blessed. There are many elements of love: forgiveness, kindness, patience, encouragement, mercy, gentleness and more.

So how can we show love to those who cross our paths daily? There are many ways to be “Christ” to one another: say a kind word, charity, a simple smile, hold the hand of someone who is dying, offer a simple prayer, share your riches, spend time with a child, and the list can go on. With Lent quickly approaching this month how can we show our love for Christ? One of my favorite Bible passages comes from 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8 which reads: Love is patient, love is kind, love is not jealous or boastful, it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist in its own way. It is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs. It does not rejoice in evil but rejoices in truth. Love bears all things, endures all things, hopes all things. Love never fails. Don’t let your love fail.

There are a few Cursillos that have popped up just in the last few weeks. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ and offer palanca for success and safety of these events.

<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
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

Peace and love to each of you,

Jan Stainbrook

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.

