

CURSILLO NEWS



Archdiocese of Mobile

May, 2001 Volume 2 No. 1

Formation in the Christian Tife

Make a

friend,

Be a

friend,

Bring that

friend

to

Christ!

Do you run and hide when the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons walk up to your front door? Do you look for the nearest bathroom when someone says to you, "You're a Catholic, right? Why do Catholics always..."? How many times have you broken out in a cold sweat when you are asked, "Where is so-and-so ever mentioned in the Bible?"

The issue here is one of Formation, (or Study, as we old folks liked to call it). Generally speaking, I think that Cursillistas are very good when it comes to Holiness (Prayer), and reasonably good when it comes to Evangelization (Action), but surely Formation is the weak link in the tripod for many of us.

Why is Formation important? The reason lies in the Scriptures; in I Peter 3:15— "Always be ready to give an account of the hope that is in you in Christ Jesus, gently and reverently." In other words, we need to be ready to explain and defend. This takes real study indeed.

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For this reason I would insist that proper Formation is In-formation. Some of what passes for "Formation" in our Group Reunion sharing really should come under the rubric of "Holiness" instead. Devotional reading of the Bible, for example, or books on prayer are useful and wonderful. But they are not Formation. Such books are really forms of "Faith seeking expression," while the classical definition of theology (and Formation) is "Faith seeking understanding." So reading the Bible is not enough; Bible study (with a commentary or a guide) is required. How many times have we passed by the chance to attend Bible study in our parishes, either during the week or on Sunday mornings?!

So many of us are "instinctive Catholics," by which I mean those who know all the right things to do but aren't sure why, or what they mean. We are a little like Tevye in Fiddler On the Roof, when talking about the prayer shawls they wear: 'You may ask, "How did this

The State of Cursillo in our Diocese

This past February, Fr. David Tokarz, Sr. Peggy Cosgrove, Tom Flohr, and myself met with Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb and Fr. Michael Farmer at the Chancery Office in Mobile to report on the status of the Cursillo Movement.

Tom Flohr did a masterful job in putting together a presentation that made it easy for everyone to follow and kept the discussion on track. We told the Archbishop that we are in good standing with the National Office and that we actively support the Movement through participation in National Encounters, Region VII Encounters, and Sub-Region Meetings. We have nine active Ultreyas with at least two that meet on a weekly basis. (Since our report, the Bay Minette Ultreya, under the leadership of Jerry and Bonnie Allain, has been initiated bringing our total to ten.) We conduct four Weekends a year – a Men's and a Women's at Holy Trinity and a Men's and a Women's at Visitation Monastery – and we average about 25 candidates per Weekend. Tom estimated that approximately 2,000 men and women have made a weekend since the inception of Cursillo in the Diocese and that about 200 are currently participating in Group Reunion and Ultreya.

The School of Leaders has started in Enterprise and in Baldwin County. Thanks to the generosity of so many of you, our treasury is in fine shape and it enables us to tithe to worthwhile charities in our Diocese six times a year. We have a Pastoral Plan with goals and objectives and which articulates a vision for the Movement in our Diocese. (We left a copy for the Archbishop.) Finally we have established a Cursillo web page at www.mobilecursillo.org which has a lot of worthwhile information and will soon contain present and past Newsletters.

We also mentioned some problem areas. One is the great distances that we have to travel throughout the Diocese for all the various Cursillo functions. (No one has been able to come up with a solution.) Another is the apparent lack of commitment from many Cursillistas who are not active in the Movement and who are not targeting key leaders. (More about that later.) Finally, we said that there are not enough clergy to support the Weekends and Ultreyas.

The Archbishop listened very intently throughout Tom's presentation and we had a good discussion afterwards. Archbishop Lipscomb shared with us his own profound experience of Cursillo which he made soon after he became a Bishop. He is a strong supporter of the Cursillo and I was impressed by his knowledge of the Movement. I think he understands that although there are other movements and/or organizations that focus on Evangelization in the Diocese, none do so with the magnitude, and perhaps effectiveness, of Cursillo. As Tom said, once you have made a Weekend, you are changed forever, whether you are active or not. Many Cursillistas, those that we see at Ultreyas, Closings, Group Reunion, etc. and those that we do not, are proactive in their parishes and very much involved in bringing Christ to their environments.

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Secretariat

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The Archbishop will do what he can to provide more visibility for Cursillo and to encourage more clergy to make a weekend. We need to remember him often in our prayers.

It occurred to me that since we gave a kind of "state of the union" to the Archbishop, it might be good to take a look at our own commitment to Cursillo. Why is it that so many of us are inactive? The Cursillo has a purpose, a method, and a strategy, which cannot be fully conveyed or understood on a Weekend alone. It takes devotion to Group Reunion and Ultreya and to the School of Leaders for those who are called to make Cursillo their primary apostolate.

The demands of modern life are many and varied. We live in a world of quick fixes, instant gratification, and ready access. In this kind of environment, we are all too ready to look for the reward without putting forth the effort. We do not recognize the value of patience or perseverance, especially when it comes to our spiritual lives. The author, Robert J. Wicks, illustrates the point with the following story by Fr. Anthony de Mello about the snail and the sparrows:

A snail ever so slowly walked across the ground toward a cherry tree under the watchful eyes of noisy sparrows in a large oak tree nearby. Then he started ever so slowly again climbing up the tree toward the newly green spring leaves high above.

When the sparrows nearby saw this, they laughed and laughed at him. Finally one flew over and said: "You fool, don't you know there are no cherries up there?"

And, as the snail kept slowly moving up toward the top of the tree he cheerfully replied: "Well, there will be when I get there!"

We need to ask ourselves some questions. Are we identifying key people in our environments, those that have the talent to bring about change, and then speaking to God about them before we speak to them about God, or are we asking people to make a Weekend because we just want them to have a "good experience"? Are we preparing our candidates properly to desire to have the joyful experience of the Cursillo, or do we send them on a Weekend with no idea of what to expect other than "you'll see, it will be a great weekend"? Are we prepared to accompany our candidate in his or her Fourth Day, to help them to find a Friendship Group and bring them to Ultreya, or do never see them again after the closing except when we run into them occasionally?

Do we desire to work on teams so that we can have another "wonderful experience" like on our own Weekend, or are we there to make Christian Community present to the candidates by the witness of an authentic Christian life in grace growing and shared? Will the candidates see us at the next Ultreya and if not, what does that say about our authenticity as Christian leaders? Are we faithful about attending the School of Leaders and if not, what does that say about our commitment as Cursillo leaders who are supposed to be formed in holiness, acquire the mentality of the Movement and live in true Christian community?

The heart of the Cursillo method is palanca and personal witness. Our prayers and testimonies about how we have transformed our environments for Christ are the best measure of the state of the Cursillo Movement in our Diocese. Like the snail, we will eventually reach our goal if we persevere.

Ultreya Leaders, please send us copies of witness talks about environments that have been changed by Cursillistas in your community. We need to publish them in our newsletter.

I recently read the following Psalm-prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours, which I think, is a good way to end this report on the state of Cursillo in our Diocese and a fitting prayer for all Cursillistas:

Lord God, eternal shepherd, you so tend the vineyard you planted that now it extends its branches even to the farthest coast. Look down on your Church and come to us. Help us remain in your Son as branches on the vine, that, planted firmly in your love, we may testify before the whole world to your great power working everywhere.

Frank Yandrasits

Lay Director

THE CURSILLISTA BEYOND THE CURSILLO

Well, this is it – the ending to what was for me a life changing experience 16 months ago. But thankfully, this is only the precursor or short course, your Cursillo. The rest of your life is your Fourth Day.

The big question for you now is "after drinking from a fire hose for three days – what do I do when I go home and back to the real world?"

You are filled with the Holy Spirit like you have never been before and when you go home, you will think differently, feel differently and maybe even look differently. But, while you were here this weekend, the rest of the world has been playing golf, watching basketball, possibly spending an hour in church, and generally recovering from their week of work – much the same as you did in previous weekends.

Your family, friends and coworkers think, "well he was gong on a retreat. He will come back rested and refreshed." Of course, we know it is a lot more involved than that.

You will return home with a commitment to holiness, formation and evangelization- a commitment to a life of idealism, dedication and love. That 3- legged stool will serve you well. With those three elements in your life, you can remain balanced and be effective in your mission to bring Christ to others.

But, what an awesome responsibility this is. We are Christ's modern day apostles. Just as Peter, James, John and the others went into the world they knew, you are now going out into your world charged with the responsibility to make Christ known in all of your environments.

The fourth day is all about daily affirmation of this responsibility **AND** daily acceptance of it. We all must go forth and find our unique place in this world, honing our own special talents and using the tools these first three days of Cursillo have taught us.

We must first -

Maintain contact with Christ by: Living the word of God- A life of holiness & improving ourselves in the image of Christ-formation

Secondly, we must -

Sustain ourselves as effective evangelizers for Christ through environmental reunions. To be effective in our apostolic evangelization we must remember to always be reasonable and balanced, constant in our course, and enthusiastic about our message. If we do these things, we will be able to "make a friend, be a friend, and bring that friend to Christ."

And third, we must -

Maintain contact with our Brothers and Sisters in Christ trough our Group Reunions and Ultreyas. As I have said, it has been 16 months since my Cursillo. I left the closing ceremony filled with the Holy Spirit. I remember the 4-hour drive back from Mobile to Auburn feeling like it lasted only an hour. I hit the ground running. I was up at 5 a.m. Monday morning, reading & praying.

I was lucky enough to have already been accepted into a very blessed, blessed even in numbers, group of men. We grouped every Sunday morning. I was evangelizing friends, family, coworkers and even our youth group.

But, let me tell you what happened. It happens to all of us and it will happen to you. Life happened. The burdens of work and life and family caused me to stumble in the pursuit of all I learned in Cursillo. I began to hit lulls and felt myself beginning to lapse back into old patterns of behavior.

Because of our human nature – our sinful nature, we do not always maintain the spiritual high we leave closing with.

Living as Christian's in today's anti-Christian world is quite a challenge. No matter how diligent or loving or dedicated a person is – he will have a very hard difficult time making a go if it on their own.

But, I still have the strength of Christ, I can feel him walk beside me in my daily life, and I get glimpses of the spiritual high that so often eludes us all.

Through my weekly group reunion and monthly Ultreya, I am able to have an ongoing relationship with Christ and an ongoing relationship with my brothers and sisters in Christ. I rely on my group mates – as they rely on me. They hold me accountable in my daily walk and continually energize me.

Now please realize that you cannot be everything to everyone – in other words you cannot do everything in every environment. Do not try to feed your family, friends and coworkers with that same fire hose that you drank from. Feed it to them gently.

But, do not fall into the pattern of non-action. We all have our special talents and can do some thing. All that is needed for evil to triumph in this world is for good people to do nothing. We can all do our part, our apostolic part, and this requires being committed to our community.

Always remember to DO WHAT YOU CAN - WITH WHAT YOU HAVE - WHERE YOU ARE.

We must Christianize our environments in and through Christ. This is our fulfillment of Christ's mission.

I must emphasize the spirit of joy and enthusiasm you can now take forth to your families, friends and community. It is the joy and enthusiasm of Christ. Believe me, they will notice.

So like that old t.v. commercial used to say – go tell two friends, and they'll tell two friends, and so on and so on. Go out and share this enthusiasm so that we can evangelize all of society.

Let me close with this. It fell out of my wife's Pilgrims Guide this morning and is very appropriate. It is entitled, "I clear the path".....

You are not at the mercy of fate or buffeted about by others. You are being led in a very definite way and others, who do not serve your purpose, are being removed out of your path by me. Do not try to plan...you are the builder, not the architect. Trust me for all. All is well, trust, have faith.

De Colores.

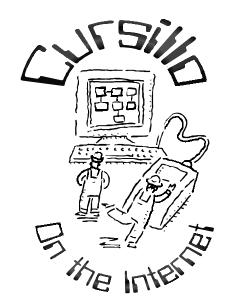
Eric Brickman

Pray the Rosary to End Abortion

4000000000

On Sunday, May 12, 2001, we prayed the rosary, the Joyful Mysteries, as a means to end abortion. The Pro-Life Group hoped for 1,000,000 people to pray the rosary that day.

Pray the Rosary.



Check out our web page at: www.mobilecursillo.org



Spring Weekends, Holy Trinity

Men's #37

Women's #38

Russell Avery Paul Brandt	St. Michael, Auburn St. John, Enterprise	Patty Angles Blake Cassel	Maxwell AFB St. John, Enterprise
Jim Carper Eric Crenshaw	St. Michael, Auburn Most Pure Heart of	Betty Chaloux	St. Robert Belarmine, Century, FL
	Mary, Mobile	Michelle Christian	St, Michael, Auburn
Jamey Durham	St. Joseph, Prattville	Magda Colin	St. John, Enterprise
Gary Kolb	St. Agatha, Bay Minette	Evelyn Etheridge	St. Robert Belarmine, Atmore
Tom Latino	St. Robert Belarmine	Chalane Jarvis	St. John, Enterpise
Sam Maloney	St. Michael, Auburn	Jean Kreis	St. Agatha, Bay Minette
Bill Maurer	Christ the King, Daphne	Emilia Lusnia	St. Bede, Montgomery
Ray Ming	St. Columba, Dothan	Omajean Maloney	St. Michael, Auburn
George Munkachy,	St. Joseph, Prattville	Michelle Mann	St. Johm, Enterprise
Mike Murphy	St. Michael, Auburn	Pamela Mazzone	St. Michael, Auburn
Matthew Nelson	St. Columba, Dothan	Dolores McLaughlin	St. Robert, Atmore
Mike Newsome	Christ the King, Daphne		
Tom Petee	St. Michael, Auburn	Debbie Meadors	St. Bede, Montgomery
Matthew Sweeney	St. Michael, Auburn	Peggy Ming	St. Columba, Dothan
Nathan Tucker	St. John, Enterprise	Jane Nixon	St. Bede, Montgomery
Luis Vallejo	St. John, Enterprise	Leatha Nordman	St. Agatha, Bay Minette
Gerald Vrazel	St. Mary, Mobile		
Michelle Vrazel	St. Mary, Mobile	Kathy Rasponi	St. John, Enterprise
		Ann Reimer	St. Ignatius, Mobile
		Odile Schneider	St. Dominic, Mobile
		Amy Sweeney	St. Michael, Auburn

Formation....cont'd

tradition get started?' I'll tell you. I don't know. But it's a tradition!" We need to be able to supply a better answer to that kind of question, especially here in the Bible Belt where Catholics are looked at with amusement by some and with suspicion (or worse) by others.

Michelle Vrazel

St. Mary, Mobile

Come to know your Faith! It is a magnificent thing, and between Adult Faith Formation and RCIA (open to all, by the way) and Bible study, there is a wealth of ways for you to grow in Formation right in your own parish. Carpe diem—seize the opportunity and grow with it.

Be a properly formed (and in-formed) Catholic. Be an effective Catholic. When you "bring a friend to Christ," make sure you know the Catholic truth that we present in the name of Christ. Together, we advance in building the Kingdom.

DE COLORES!

MOBILE ARCHDIOCESE CURSILLO MOVEMENT ULTREYA LEADERS

AUBURN ULTREYA

Alicia Gimenez 1st Tuesday of each month 2057 Hummingbird Lane St. Michael Church Chapel 7pm

Auburn, AL 36830 334-821-8790

BALDWIN ULTREYA

Sandy and Bill Robinson 2nd Saturday of each month 1207 Lovett Lane Christ the King Immaculata

Daphne, AL 36526 Center at 6:30 PM 334-626-8130

Megan and Jim Conwell

156 White Avenue

Fairhope AL 36532 334-928-3691

DOTHAN ULTREYA

Pat Sears 2nd Monday of each month 209 Belton Drive St. Columba off. Conf. room

Dothan, AL 36305 at 7 PM

ELMORE COUNTY AREA ULTREYA

Denise and Bob Pavolini 3rd Thursday of each month 536 Julie Court St. Joseph's Parish Hall Prattville, AL 36066 Prattville at 7:30 PM

ENTERPRISE ULTREYA

Mady Flohr 3rd Thursday of each month

140 Laurel Breeze Drive St. John at 7 PM

Enterprise. AL 36330

334-347-7068

MOBILE ULTREYA

Jim and Dorothy Beattie 3rd Saturday of each month
62 S. Sage Avenue At alternate Mobile area churches

Mobile, AL 36606 Call for time and place

334-479-9374

Charlie Bowen Meets weekly on Wed. after 334-660-7280 5:30 p.m. Mass at St. Pius

Chapel

MONTGOMERY ULTREYA

Father David Tokarz Call for time and place

St. Bede 334-272-3463

GULF BEACH ULTREYA (Gulf Beach Group Reunion and Ultreya)

Jo Armstrong St. Thomas by the Sea

27517 E. Beach Blvd. Meets weekly on Wed. after 5:30 PM
Orange Beach, AL 36561 Mass. Fr. Maher and Deacon Ray Basoco

334-961-2905

NORTH BALDWIN/ESCAMBIA ULTREYA

Bonnie and Jerry Allain Meets on second Tuesday of each 16680 Lower Lac Court St. Agatha, Bay Minette 7 pm Bay Minette, AL 36507

334-580-3444

Closing talk for women's Cursillo - November 5, 2000 Cathy O'Keefe

For some reason, two old '60s era quotes returned to my mind as I was writing this talk. The first was said by William Sloan Coffin, a theologian, when he was asked to give the invocation at the Harvard/Yale football game one year. The fans were poised in their seats, itching with excitement for their team, and ready for the good preacher to invoke God's help with a win for their side. So, when Coffin rose to the podium heads were bowed all around in deepest prayer. "Lord, he prayed, please save us from the illusion that anything that happens here today is of any significance at all." Gasps went up, then, I suppose private and public boos and condemnations. Needless to say, he was never asked to return. I offer that vignette this evening as a wake-up call to all of us who can get more worked up over football than we do over the real work of God.

Now on to the second quote by Alfred North Whitehead. It's hanging on the wall here: "Hope arouses, as nothing else can, a passion for the possible." You candidates are looking at a room full of hopeful people. They prayed for you starting months and months ago hoping that you'd decide to make this weekend. And they prayed again all weekend, hoping that God would touch your heart through the words of a talk or an interaction with each other.

Your fourth day has already started. It started the moment that one of you got up to this podium and responded to your weekend. You can't know if something one of you has already said was just what someone over there needed to hear. That someone could be from your family, your church community, or a total stranger. The fourth day consists of every moment that God has a chance to use you to bring his love to someone else. Some of you will leave here for a home that will be transformed because both you and your spouse have made this weekend and will commit together to living with this new awareness of your mission.

For some of you, your home will be your mission. What you experienced here may be unexplainable to your family at home. But God knows it - you have a partner now who is closer to you than perhaps you've ever realized. The friend you bring to Christ some day may be your husband or your children. I can't think of a more meaningful place to live out your fourth day. Look over there - there isn't one person on this side of the room who hasn't prayed in hope that someone in their family will recognize God's tenderness and longing for that family member's love.

Some of you may go home alone tonight because you don't have a family waiting there for you. But you know now that you don't ever have to have a "home alone" feeling again. Your Lord is going home with you. Look at this side of the room. Do you see those smiles? Our Lord went home with them after their weekend, and they haven't been the same. They look a little weird, don't they???

Right now, we're all on pins and needles, hoping again. We're like the football fans at Harvard and Yale that day when Coffin spoke. We're tense, we're poised, and we're hoping that God played with you this weekend in a way that created something new and wonderful. And, unlike Coffin, we have prayed with confidence that God was very much at work on the weekend, and that every hour held something significant for someone.

Now, we want you to become part of the experience we share that helps to keep this wonderful awareness of God's presence going. That experience is grouping. That's grouping - I didn't say we want you to become groupies, although some of us think of you Christ the King folks as Deasey groupies.

No, grouping means finding a small circle of friends within the larger Cursillo community who will commit to coming together on a regular basis, maybe even weekly, to keep this awareness alive. We call that a group reunion.

I've been grouping for about fifteen years, I think. My group members have changed over the years as people have come and gone from Mobile or felt that another group might better meet their needs. Grouping is based on a theology of presence - that the best way to stay tuned into God's presence is to recognize it in our own lives and the lives of others. Groups share confidentially - that means that they keep what you share within the group's heart, the way that Mary treasured all that she experienced with her family. The grace of group reunion comes in seeing that all the experiences of your life, what constitutes your individual story, is where your salvation is played out. Through listening to the stories of others' lives, and seeing your own unfold, you are invited to a more intimate understanding of the meaning of life. I can't live out your story and you can't live out mine. But together, by being there for one another, we are eventually shaped by the faith of the entire community and all our collective stories. Like Mary, we eventually see experiences, our stones, as treasures.

We share the difficult and the joyful. If you look around this room, I can guarantee you that people have shared births, the challenges of raising children, the joys and difficulties of relationships, loss, suffering, engagements, weddings, mid-life crises, divorce, the pains of aging, grief, and death. We've laughed and cried with one another, challenged one another to make changes, rejoiced at new love, supported second marriages, reveled in love still fresh after fifty years, and prayed with one another through cancer and other illnesses. Right now my group meets by phone because one of our members is in Seattle, and we just couldn't bear to leave her out of our reunion. Our closeness over so many years made us want to find a way to continue.

There's a wonderful saying that I heard in the African American community -"You can't be what you don't see." Reunion is discovering God's intimacy through people intimacy. When I bring my story to the table, when I find the trust and courage to share it, when I discover that I have friends who have no interest in judging me, when I live my faith over a period of months or years with people who want the same thing that I want, a deeper understanding of God's love, I am already in the Kingdom. It isn't out there somewhere - it's here. That's why it's so exciting to see parishes invigorated with members who have made Cursillo. They know what this is and they want it for their fellow parishioners.

My husband has fallen in love with Kairos. This is the outreach of Cursillo from many different denominations - oh, maybe you didn't know that Cursillos are regularly made by Methodists, Episcopalians, and others. Kairos is an ecumenical movement that takes the Cursillo experience into prisons. This very weekend 40 inmates from Fountain Prison in Atmore are doing the exact same thing we are - at this very hour men are standing at a podium just like this one, and many are crying, to say that they have never experienced love like this. Their fourth days will be spent back in their cell blocks trying to be witnesses to others who so desperately need to know that God loves them and forgives them. My husband finds it to be a place of great grace, this place of murderers, thieves, and addicts.

Yes, hope arouses, as nothing else can, a passion for the possible. Women know because of pregnancy, what it's like to feel hope, to experience it turning inside your body. Hope is not just an idea but a felt reality. Tonight this room is full of expectant hope. We have all labored so that you might give birth to a new way of our lives' living. And we continue to hope that you will say to your spouse in the next few days, "I want to group, too. Help me find a group that's good for me." If you do that, we promise that the joy fills this side of the room awaits you, too. And though we don't know what all the possibilities are, we can't wait to experience them with you. Take home the passion, share it with your honey, or let it spill into your work place. But hold onto its memory so that you will know, as William Sloan Coffin did, that the really significant things in life happen in places like this, with people as ordinary as we are, in the day to day events of all our lives.

God bless you all, Cathy O' Keefe The Archbishop will do what he can to provide more visibility for Cursillo and to encourage more clergy to make a weekend. We need to remember him often in our prayers.

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Frank Yandrasits

Lay Director

Pray for Us

In sympathy:

Justin Payne, grandson of Mary Jean and Bill Cotton

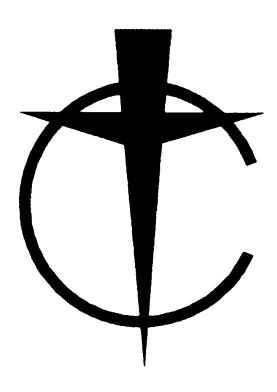
Cavan "Honey" McConico, Men's 30

Mary Simpson, Women's

Welcome the babies:

Joseph Michael Conwell, son of Jim and Megan Conwell, Men's and Women's 32

Jeri Grace Grundhoefer, daughter of Paul and Marianne (W#37) Grundhoefer



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2001 National Encounter REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE TYPE OR LEGIBLY PRINT ALL INFORMATION-THANK YOU) (Please use a separate form for each registrant)

will not be able to guarantee any particular roommates if the forms do not If you desire to room with a specific individual (spouse, friend, etc.), then the other individual's registration form MUST accompany THIS form. We M. I Is your spouse attending? **Q** Yes Zip Code Preferred Language Work Telephone First Name E-mail State Gender (Circle One) Male Female Home Telephone (Arch)Diocese Last Name Address City Fax

accompany one another.

Requested Roommate's Name

List any special dietary needs

Date you attended your Cursillo Weekend

Where did you attend your Cursillo Weekend?

Please be sure to include your \$35.00 nonrefundable deposit with this form.

Send form and deposit to:

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