

FORMATION

Eileen Mariani

"I read not for information, but for transformation." When I read that quote by some beloved saint (I think it was St. Augustine), it reinforced for me again the importance of the second leg of our Cursillo tripod. For this newsletter, Dottie McCaffrey of Millers Falls, a long time Cursillista, is sharing a book that has been a favorite of many in our neck of the woods. What follows is Dottie's review of *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* by Richard Rolheiser, OMI and published in 1999 by Doubleday Press.

The longing referred to in the title is that desire we all have to feel complete and at peace. How we fill that longing, what we do with the fire inside us is our spirituality; it is the desire that brought us to Cursillo in the first place and what spurs us on in our Fourth Day.

Whatever our spirituality is, it shapes our desires and actions. It can be life-giving or destructive. Father asks, "How do we walk forward and at the same time be realistic and take into account all the unique pressures of our age?" In our modern world, we live in tension between our inner longing and the worldliness around us. Rolheiser speaks of wonder many times in the book, noticing that we in the modern world are easily jaded and bored with the everyday wonders that delight children and that delighted our ancestors who lived in simpler times.

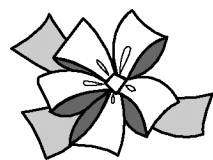
Rolheiser uses many concrete, everyday examples, citing people and situations to illustrate his points. In simple language, he defines Catholic spirituality, distinguishing it from New Age ideas and grounding it in our tradition, based on Christ who gives life to our spirituality and prayer. He defines the necessary components of healthy spirituality: private prayer and morality, social justice, "mellowness of spirit," and community. Rolheiser stresses the importance of keeping a balance among these elements and he gives examples of how imbalance among them can be harmful to us.

Sustaining spirituality for the long haul, according to Rolheiser, requires an act of faith, followed by wonder, prayer, ritual, worship, and service to God. He expresses the hope that in reading his book "a bit of God's consolation might seep through and touch you." Dottie ends her review with an affirmation that this book has certainly done so for her.

Another book discussed during grouping at Ultreya is small but very powerful. Joan Chittister has again written in a way that can transform us. The title is *The Breath of the Soul: Reflections on Prayer* and it was published this year by Twenty-third Publications. It is a discussion of the attitudes that prepare us for prayer such as vulnerability, patience, change, etc. In all there are forty-two segments, two to three pages long, that offer insights for reflection. Reading and meditating on one attitude a day can truly enrich your prayer life. And for those of you who can't read enough by this remarkable woman, you can receive a free weekly e-newsletter at www.joanchittister.org. May you find comfort, peace, and light for the soul as you read during this wondrous waiting season.

De Colores

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CLIP OUT & SAVE!

Dec	Jan	Feb	March	CALENDAR
18	15	19	19	DIOCESAN Ultreya - 7:30 p.m. (3rd Fri.) Blessed Sacrament Parish Hall, Holyoke, MA
10	14	11	11	Local Ultreya - 7 p.m. St. Stanislaus, Chicopee, MA (2nd Thurs.)
Feb. 5-7, 2010		Men's Retreat Weekend - Genesis Spiritual Life Center		
March 5-7, 2010		Women's Retreat Weekend - Holiday Inn, Holyoke		
April 16-19, 2010		Men's Cursillo Weekend - Holy Name, Springfield		
May 28-31, 2010		Women's Cursillo Weekend - Holy Name, Springfield		
Visit our website for applications, latest updates, etc. www.cursillowmass.org				

BOO and the UN-BRAZZIO

Dianne Murphy

I started my Cursillo journey 35 years ago and it has been a great one to be sure. The thing I took most to heart was the embrazzio. I had not experienced such wonderful hugs before...certainly not ones that both wrapped me in sincere friendship, but also brought me Christ's love. I love to get hugs and I love to give them. Something I did several years ago though might just be a good thing to pass along now that winter and the FLU season is here.

My husband, Jim, and I have 1 son and 7 daughters. The girls have brought 7 wonderful men into our family and I affectionately refer to them as my "out-laws." (They stole my daughters' hearts, after all.) They make up a very special group that I refer to as the Benevolent Order of Outlaws...otherwise known as BOO! They have matching bandanas, refrigerator magnets identifying them as members, and even have membership cards with the motto "I LOVE MY MOTHER-IN-LAW."

One outlaw, who shall remain nameless to protect the innocent, was especially shy and did not like to be hugged. So as not to embarrass him, we would simply greet each other, elbow-to-elbow and say "Love ya."

This wonderful young man has grown to let me hug him in greeting and since he has become a Cursillista, knows that this is more than just a hug. It's the embrazzio. It's Christ's love shared with each other in a special way.

With the Flu season upon us, it might not be a bad idea to go back to the elbow-to-elbow greeting he and I made up so long ago. I'll call it an "UN-brazzio." We can still bring Christ in greeting each other, yet not worry about the flu.

Come spring, we can get back to the really good hugs. Love ya!

De Colores

HOPE cont.

a single act by a single person.

We need to hang on to the "hope" of Advent and know that with the help of our Lord, we as individuals can do great things and *together* we can work to eliminate hunger, conflicts and even war. We are not alone - we have Christ with us - *and nothing is impossible.*

Let us remember the story of an elderly man who walked the beach every morning and at certain times of the year the tides would wash the starfish ashore. This man would walk the beach and bend down to pick up a single starfish then throw it back into the sea. Someone approached him and asked why he was bothering to do that when there were thousands being washed up on the beach - what difference could *he* possibly make? The old man stooped down, picked up another starfish, threw it back into the sea and replied; "sure made a difference to that one!"

Irene & I wish everyone, a *Very Merry Christmas.*

De Colores

*The Word became flesh and
made his dwelling among us.*
John 1:14



Winter Retreat
Applications inside
- they make great
Christmas Gifts
Merry Christmas to All!

THE CURSILLO COMMITTEE
P.O. Box 1207
HOLYOKE, MASS. 01041-1207
Time Dated Material

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Springfield, MA
Permit No. 1128

Men's Retreat Weekend

FEBRUARY 5-7, 2010

Loving Your Way to Holiness

Genesis Spiritual Life Center

53 Mill Street, Westfield, MA 01085-4253 www.genesiscenter.us

\$160 per person/double occupancy

\$180 per person/private room

\$99 commuter rate includes all meals and presentations

Don't wait, there are only 35 overnight spaces available.

Deadline for registration is January 17, 2010

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Share room with _____

Please make checks payable to: *Wendell Pennell*

Mail registration form and check to: Wendell Pennell c/o PIP Printing,

49 Lamb St, South Hadley, MA 01075

Any dietary needs or allergies to anything please place note with registration

Women's Retreat Weekend

MARCH 5-7, 2010

Close Encounters of the Divine Kind:

A Practical Awareness of God's Presence in our Lives

Location: Holyoke Holiday Inn (off Rt. 91 next to Holyoke Mall)

Time: 6:30 - 7:00 pm Registration Friday, March 5

Price: \$160.00 pp - Double occupancy rooms - choose a roommate or the Holiday Inn will assign someone to share your room.

Deadline for payment in FULL is Feb. 23 to reserve your spot!!!!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Share room with _____

Date of Cursillo _____ Birthday: Month _____ Day _____

Please make checks payable to: Diane Fradette
23 Peachtree Road, E. Longmeadow, MA 01028.

Phone 413-224-1234 - fradette@charter.net

Please let us know about any dietary needs or allergies and put note in with your check.

Bring your used books for a Book Swap Table.



NOTE FROM THE LAY DIRECTOR

Pat Triggs

In a recent mailing I received from Mercy Home for Children, there was a little story attributed to author Leo Buscaglia. Little Jamie tried out for a part in the school play, and was so excited about it. His mother was afraid he might not be chosen for the part. On the day of selection, Jamie came in all excited and happy. "Guess what Mom! I've been chosen to clap and cheer!"

As I read this and pondered on it, I knew it held a lot of meaning, for me and for many others. There are times in my life when I know exactly what I am supposed to be doing, but there are many more times when it is so less clear. Should I be stepping into this situation? Should I be pushing myself a little more? Is this the time to step back? Am I being generous enough with my time and talent? Am I using excuses to keep me from my part in making God's love more evident? Sometimes I use the excuse of being "busy" to explain away my decisions. I recognized great wisdom in this little parable. Even if it is not my most comfortable place to be, there is a time for me to "clap and cheer." How much good I can do by recognizing those times when I should be listening with my whole being when someone is sharing a heartache, a sadness, a time of distress, a happy event, or a doubt. Our formation requires us to take the time to discern what we need to do next; Holiness requires us to prayerfully communicate with God about it and Evangelization may very well have us cheering and clapping! Each stage of life seems to require of us new skills, most of which we do not know how to do! However, I pray I can master the "cheering and clapping" role as I turn into this next stage of my life.

De Colores

HOPE

Deacon John Bledsoe

Advent, as we all know, is a time of hope as we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child. We have this month every year, to practice "hope" – in the "hope" that it will stick and stay with us for the next 11 months! As we anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus on Christmas day our mood seems to soften, we feel "hope" that Christ will be here in our presence on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as we celebrate at mass. Many of us *then* fall back into our daily routines for another 11 months and our "hope" slowly slips away – which is too bad because Christ is with us *and all around* us 24/7, we only have to look to find Him *in each other*.

In the gospel of Luke we heard how John the Baptizer "went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." He was a single individual, preaching an uncomfortable message. He didn't have a fancy marketing manager or a limousine to carry him around the countryside; he didn't have a formal education and no financial supporters. We read that his appearance and his preaching were unappealing and unattractive. Yet, great crowds flocked to hear him and to answer the call to repent and be baptized. What John did as a single person, against such large odds, was to accomplish great things because of the "hope" that he received from our Lord. As written in the words of the Prophet Isaiah, John was "a voice of *one* crying out in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord."

This is an important lesson for us to remember during this Advent season (and in the following 11 months) – there can be great power in a *single* voice, a *single* action, and in a *single* life that can make a huge difference in the world. The first week of December was the 54th anniversary of one person that chose to stand up against discrimination in the South. That "power of one" certainly helped change the way this country treated blacks as Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. That act of defiance in the face of possible incarceration made a huge leap forward in the struggle of millions in our country. It was made more powerful because it was

cont. on back

Update on Palanca.....

From the Lay Director

A couple of years ago we ran an article in the newsletter about palanca. Many new Curillistas have joined us since then, and some of our older Cursillistas are reconnecting, so this seemed worth revisiting.

Palanca is one of the most powerful tools used in the Cursillo method. The outpouring of love as demonstrated by prayers, sacrifices and good works is a very powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Many candidates identify this as the most significant part of the experience! So, how do we capture the essence of **PALANCA**? According to the Leaders' Manual (p136), founder Bishop Hervas reminds us that "...everything in the Cursillo is the work of God's grace. It is necessary, therefore, to pray and sacrifice for the spiritual and apostolic success..." "Prayers and sacrifices on behalf of the Cursillo (palanca) are crucial to its spiritual success." (p138)

What is **NOT PALANCA**? This is sometimes a little confusing. Perhaps on your weekend you received a poster with some photos on it.....a nice gesture, but in itself is definitely NOT palanca. Or maybe someone wanted to send you flowers....a nice gesture, but NOT palanca. In order to avoid hurt feelings and confusion over the true nature of palanca, and to assist the ChaChas who need to distribute the palanca, we are reminding our Cursillo Community that only that which expresses true palanca, that is, *prayers and sacrifices*, can be distributed during the weekend. Gifts are really not appropriate at this time. If there is some special thing that you wish to give to your candidate, save it for the trip home, or for the next day!

A final thought on PALANCA....Why not start now on incorporating palanca into your daily activities? Then when the weekend rolls around this spring, you will already be prepared to establish this unique gift for the candidates and team.

De Colores

HELP WANTED

We are in need of a 'webmaster' to keep our website current. Volunteer would need to keep in touch with chairpersons on the Secretariat and then make sure our events and calendar are up-to-date. Interested? Email Deacon John at John@pipmail.com

Donations to Cursillo

In Memory of
Virginia Antaya
and Ed Blaney
from Claire Bielanski

For Cursillo Newsletter
mailing costs
from Claire Bielanski

For the May Cursillo Weekend
Karin Spencer

~ IN MEMORIAL ~

Fred Roberts (Nov. 10, 2009)
made weekend in CT 1965
Team Sept. 3, 1967
and Jan. 21, 1968

Donations can be made at any time,
send to: Cursillo Committee
PO Box 1207, Holyoke, MA 01041

VIGIL FOR CURSILLO

Did you know that there is a vigil held the 1st Friday of EVERY MONTH and has been for years?
Each person is asked to take one hour at St. John the Evangelist church, Main St., Agawam. We have a request from the faithful volunteers that have been keeping this going for some new volunteers. This would be a wonderful Action for your group and for yourself, or palanca for a loved one. Call Barb Weissbrod at 532-5474 to sign up. Thank you!



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