



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.

December 2023

Application Forms are on the Website:

www.cursillo419.org

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Our Spiritual Advisor

Ark Spiritual Directors Article from Fr Jim Brown

Happy Holydays dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I say that greeting not to mimic the secular culture going on around us. A culture that relegates to two events during the “Winter Holidays”, Thanksgiving Day, focused on over eating and football on T.V. and the one day of December 24/25th with a focus on material stuff exchange. Oh there might be a slight religious expression given to thanksgiving and Christmas spirit, family gatherings and sharing memories, but that is about all a secular culture can offer.

I remember many years ago, I wanted to spend Advent and Christmas locked away in a quiet monastery somewhere hidden in the hills. Then I realized that God sent His Son into the very cacophony of the world that is our secular culture. So I decided to make the most of our own holi holy Days.

Our “HolyDays” span two months, from the four weeks of Advent, to the Christmas Octave, to the Season of Epiphany to the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple on February 2nd. Plus a string of holy days as well. Following the Advent Season we have Christmas tide, Epiphany of the Lord, and the conclusion of the Christmas Season (not on December 26th) on February second.

As we anticipate Christmas, we first must prepare ourselves to be open to what God wants to do in our own lives. This year, Cycle B - from Mark’s Gospel, Advent is the shortest Season because the Fourth Week is only a few hours long instead of a week. No matter, we still celebrate four Sundays of Advent.



Each of the four weeks have their own violet candle, representing a period of time (centuries) that God prepared for the Birth of His Son, Jesus, except the third week which is rose color called Gaudete Sunday. I am using a book by Fr. Mark Toups called *“Rejoice!, An Advent Pilgrimage into the Heart of Scripture.”* from Ascension Press. (YEAR B). His reflections for each week as well as each day of the week. The first week centers on the HEAR, the second week: SPEAK; the third: HEAL; and the fourth: ENTER IN. This year we are following Mary and Joseph on their Advent Journey.

Always during Advent we celebrate several very important feast days, December 6th St Nicholas Day (the authentic St Nick not the imposter); December 8th the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (a Holy Day of Opportunity *read obligation*); December 12th the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Also our Jewish brothers and sisters will celebrate the eight days of Hanukkah from December 8-15th.

The Christmas Season then begins on Christmas Eve, December 24 and continues for the twelve days until The Feast of Epiphany. Within those days we celebrate January First, The Feast of the Mary’s Motherhood of God and the Day Dedicated for Prayer for Peace as the new calendar years begins.

Epiphany runs to the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus and then to the Presentation (40 days) from His birth, on February 2nd.

What a blessing we have in celebrating not just a few days, but several seasons during these Winter Holidays. It’s even better than something Hallmark Christmas movies can produce.

The real blessing is that we don’t have to do much in preparation but to open our hearts and our lives and surrender to what the Lord wants to do for us. I do hope you can share some of my thoughts with others and witness our faith life in the true meaning of what Christmas is really all about...God’s tremendous love for you and me.

Enjoy! And Happy Holy Days!

Fr Jim Brown



Lay Director

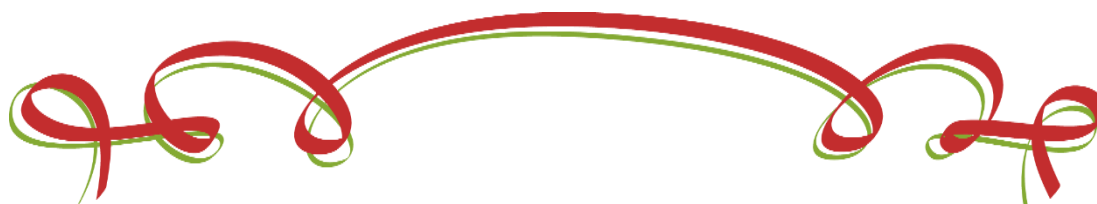
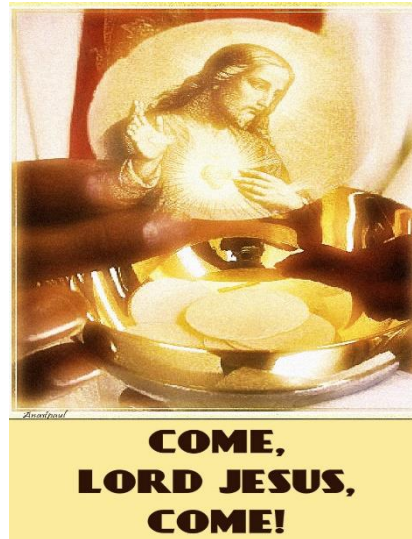
Friends, We pray that you all had a blessed Thanksgiving Day with family and/or friends. Sharing what God has given to you. We are so blessed to have you as friends and family in this Cursillo Movement. It is such a joy to be able to come together and share on the weekends or Saturday at Holy Hour & Serenade, Closings, Focus days, Reunion Ultreya, School of Leaders, Picnic, Grouping or...whenever we can get together. I echo what St Paul said, "I continually give thanks to God for you...". So many times I see you, yes you, step up and do what is needed! God sees you too! May He shower you with many abundant blessings! It takes many to keep this movement going. With so many wonderful ideas and thoughts. I see God continuing to bless us as we continue to strive to follow Him. We work so good together bringing in new people, new friends to meet our friend Jesus. Let's continue that path and strive to bring *many* more to Christ. Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ.

And then we turn the corner and Advent and Christmas are here! Time seems to fly by. And what a precious gift God has given us; Jesus! O come O come Emanuel! Let us ready our hearts and souls this Advent by doing what God calls each of us individually and as a family to do; listen to His calling. Then following what He asks of us. May each one of us step out of our comfort zones and step to the beat of Christ's drum. Let us really listen to Him and try to hear what He asks of us. The world can be so noisy! Take time to quiet ourselves daily, whether in a chapel or a space at home, and listen to the still quiet whisper of God. You won't be sorry. Come Lord Jesus Come!! Fill our hearts with your love to overflowing that we may bring more souls to you! May it be with living our daily lives that others will see our love for You. May we be a light for others to see, dispelling the darkness of the world we live in and bring Joy to the World. Hark the Herald Angels Sing Glory to the New Born King!!!

Yours in Christ

John Lyons

Kathy Otermat



Pre-Cursillo

. Looking forward to receiving candidate applications for the Spring Weekends!

We have not received any applications so far. It is never too early to begin working with your potential candidates to make their plans to attend and send us an application.

Don't forget the candidate application has a section for the candidates parish priest to complete and a section for you to complete. You also need to send a sponsors application with it. This is information that the Rector and Assistant Rector need to work with in making table assignments and is often helpful for the Spiritual Advisor.

Now is the time to tell them of the dates of the weekend so that they can ensure they have a clear schedule for attending the (whole) weekend.

The Men's weekend is March 7th thru March 10th, 2024 and the Women's weekend is April 11th thru April 14th, 2024.

As always, now's the time to Make a Friend, be a Friend and Bring a Friend to Christ.

Gary & Helen Keel

hkeel@buckeye-express.com

419-476-9347



Cursillo

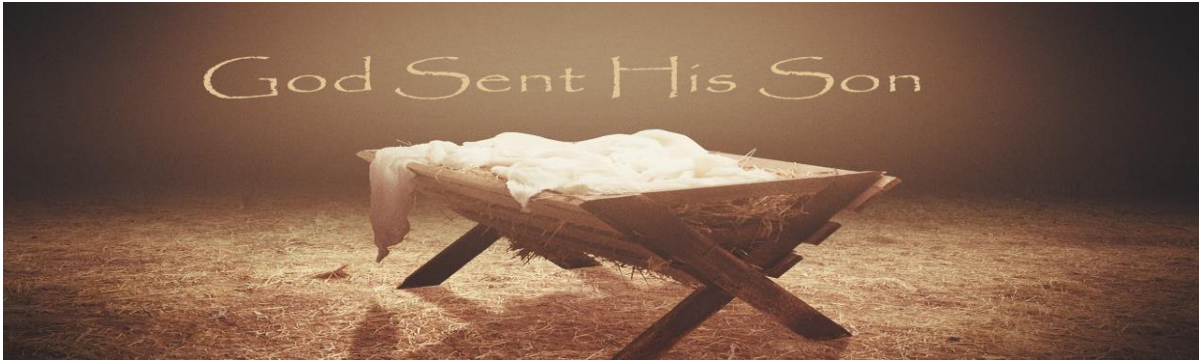
DeColores to all!

We are hoping and praying that everyone is enjoying the season that has quickly come upon us.

It has been the experience of many that loneliness and depression can creep in around the holidays. Can I suggest that we spend some time in prayer lifting up one another. Perhaps a phone call to someone who may be alone or sharing a meal with someone who has lost a loved one. We know what Christ would do and we don't need a bracelet to remind us (WWJD). Keep the applications coming and from Robert and Dave:

HAVE A MERRY AND BLESSED HOLIDAY SEASON.

God Bless DeColores ---- Bob Drewior & Dave Zaborski



School of Leaders :

What A Loving God We Have. As we enter the season of Advent, we have given thanks to our Lord for everything he has given us. We now look forward to Christmas, and the greatest gift our Lord could possibly give us. His only Son who died for us to forgive our sins. Along with the Holy Spirit to help give us guidance. May we openly accept these gifts and use them to share with one another.

The next School Of Leaders will be on January 20th 9am. in St.Michael in Findlay.

Walter Beckford wbeckford@bex.net

Advent greetings to all my Cursillo family!

We don't have School of Leaders in December, but we encourage all of you to continue grouping and living in the hopeful expectations that our advent prayers foster. I have had my share of blessings amid the trials of life this past month plus.

YOU, good friends, are a huge part of that!

It is remarkable how many cards, texts, calls and emails have made their way to us. There are always blessings in the trials of life and our Cursillo family is one of the best! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Remember that the Holy family didn't have a perfect tree, lots of presents, or a fancy meal. They had one heck of a lot of challenges, yet Jesus our Savior came among us from the depths of those circumstances.

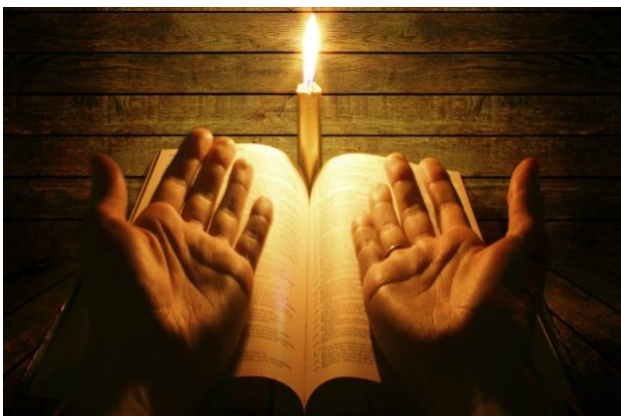
Let's think of how we can be present to Jesus in all those around us and learn patience, acceptance, and grow deeper in our faith from Mary and Joseph this advent season.

See you in January!

Blessings and hugs,

Annie Blum annieblum516@gmail.com

Prayervine Prayer request for this month



Mark Blum - hand injury & brain bleeds, Mary Catpn and Joyce Bates - breast cancer, Jim - massive heart attack, Patrick Steyer - Covid, Adeline - biopsy for lesions, Verna - heart issues, Jesse Halfhill - blood infection, Jim - still in hospital, Jan - nasal surgery, Bob Drewior - EGD & Colonoscopy

Fourth Day

Greetings to all.

We hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving. As we begin the season of Advent, let us not forget what this time is preparing us for. Now is the time to contemplate and meditate on all the blessings of family and friends. We all want to remind you of staying in contact with the new Cursillistas and encourage everyone to attend groupings and Ultreyas. Stay active and thank the Lord, always! Wishing you all a blessed Advent and a glorious Christmas. You are all in our prayers. Bill and Betty and BeckyBecky Smeltz, Bill and Betty Obringer

4th Day

Living in a world
after the resurrection



*And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us, and we have
seen his glory, glory as of the
only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth. John 1:14*



There is no Ultreya for area 8 in Dec.
We will have a potluck celebration in January 8 from 7-9 PM @ St. Pete's in Mansfield. We will give you a reminder in the next Ark.
All are welcome

The next Ultreya for area 7 and 10 will be Jan. 28, 2024 at 7pm.



PALANCA

Please pray, fast, say rosaries, do "palanca" etc. for the Cursillistas and teams as they ready for their events.

What an exciting month this month brings. First, we have the feast of St Nicholas, followed by the feast of the Immaculate Conception, then for our Hispanic community we have the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, then finally the feast of the Nativity. You can also include, in this festive month, the feast of the Holy Family which really falls on the Sunday after Christmas. What a great month of celebration. My prayer for you is a joyous, peaceful, and meaningful holiday with family, friends or just by yourself. And may you get what you asked for (for me it is patience). Many blessings to all.

Don't forget to continue praying for our brothers and sisters living their Cursillos (only 5 this month).

Jan Stainbrook, Outgoing Palanca Chair



Witness : share how God is working in your life = email to = judbrick616@gmail.com

A witness for my Cursillo sisters and brothers.

I would like to share how Jesus turned things around for me, especially my attitude. Following this past Spring Cursillo weekend, I had an idea about a Focus Day in the Fall as renewal day for all four weekends of the year. I shared this with Secretariat and School of Leaders and was affirmed by both groups to develop such a program. I asked for volunteers to help as a committee to bring it about.

As time progressed, I took it upon myself to prepare the agenda and get it approved by the powers that be and asked for volunteers to lead parts of the agenda. Then I went about developing the invitations with a definite Autumn theme. We put the word out for the September men's weekend to save the date for November 18 as the Fall Focus Day of Renewal for the four weekends of the year.

Unfortunately, I was not able to be present for the October 5th Secretariat meeting, so I sent my plans and request for help with the actual day in November with a couple as delegates for me to the meeting.

When I returned from the weekend conference, I learned that the Secretariat had cancelled the Focus Day and rescheduled it for February. I was shocked with the news and became angry and had all kinds of negative things going through my mind and heart. The reschedule was confirmed at the Women's weekend in October.

What was I going to do with all the invitations, already printed, mailing lists and labels already to go, postage purchased etc.?

When I went to the October Secretariat meeting, I was feeling very distant and wanted to bail out of the Reunion and everything else. BUT, on the way Jesus spoke to my heart and said, "apologize for being so belligerent and revengeful." Wow! What a clear message. Jesus gave me another idea to salvage a lot of the work on the first idea, with the support of other Secretariat members, to reconfigure a few things and prepare the labels for the two Fall weekends. And it all seems to work out. Praise the Lord!

As I look back on the experience I realize that I didn't pray about or ask for divine assistance but took it upon myself, with good intentions, to make this thing happen. What a difference when Jesus takes over and really makes things happen. Lesson learned; I hope.

Blessing upon all of you my sisters and brothers. May you be blessed with Christmas JOY and PEACE.

Fr Jim Brown

Secretariat Member openings

Current Openings

Facilities

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

'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.

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

