



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 2026

Application Forms are on the Website:

www.cursillo419.org

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Spiritual Advisor

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

AH! The Season of Lent! And already we are well into the throes of the Season, the 'springtime' of the Church's liturgical calendar. I remember as a kid looking into those long six weeks, the 40 days of Lent, fasting and giving up and the extra prayers, Stations of the Cross on Sunday afternoon instead of the movies. But now it hardly begins and its Holy Week and Easter already.

One of my friends, Fr Bill Richter used to conclude the Ash Wednesday Mass with the admonition: "Have an excruciating Lent!" Perhaps, some may still consider it this severe with the challenge of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Lent But actually it is meant to be a sort of retreat to prepare us for Easter and beyond. The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) is the original source of Lent along with the rituals for the catechumens and the candidates, the sponsors and the community to

prepare them for the Sacraments at the Easter Vigil.

We can attend Lent in a very serious manner or very casual or not at all. That is our choice. It can stay 'out there' or it can have the effect of changing our life. That is our choice. Let's say that this Lent you want to get serious about your spiritual life, your relationship with Jesus, with your family and friends, coworkers and even strangers. And with yourself as well. May I suggest a way, an opportunity to approach that will help you.

An article I read in a Priest Magazine by Patricia Sharbough, caught my imagination and I would like to share with you.

Spring Weekends 2026

Men - June 4-7th

Women -- June 18 - 21st

Maria Stein, OH

The Icon for this reflection is the Gospel of the First Sunday of Lent, Jesus in the Desert.

At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

He fasted for forty days and forty nights and afterwards was hungry...
Matthew 4:1-11.

The temptations Jesus encounters in his 40 days in the desert, hunger, testing God and idolatry reflect the very temptations that the people of Israel experienced in the wilderness. We see this pattern so often that we are compelled to ask what it has to teach us about our own faith journey. Perhaps this pattern is repeated so often and so consistently because there is only one way to move toward God from the tyranny of our own egos and from the

tyranny of others, and that way involves walking through lonely places and encountering feelings of desolation and abandonment.

The Greek word for desert is *Eremos* – translated as wilderness, a place abandoned, empty and desolate. In the plural, the word means lonely places. The desert is empty and desolate. There is nothing there. It is in nothingness that we are stripped of distractions, self-importance and self-control. In the solitude of the desert, we come face to face with ourselves, our fears, anxieties, our fragility, our incompleteness, our wounds, our hungers, all those things from which we want to flee. We become aware that we are not complete without God. Our deepest identity is hidden with Christ in God (Col.3.3).

In her article, Patricia quotes from Trappist Father Charles Cummings from his book, “Spirituality and the Desert Experience.” “The desert is there, inside us, to challenge our sense of belonging entirely to any place or any human person, We can belong to a place and a person but not entirely. We can put down roots but not permanently, because the desert within reminds us that this is not our permanent place.”

Loneliness is an important ingredient in many of our life experiences. We’re born alone; we die alone and find many loneliness places along the way. But loneliness can offer us many gifts if we are willing to listen. One important gift is awareness of the deep chasm of emptiness within us, the abyss we cannot fill, that urges us to reach beyond ourselves, to cry out to God and to pray. Loneliness tells us the truth about our basic poverty inherent in the very human condition.

Many of the Psalms echo this cry for God.



Loneliness awakens in us the truth that we are not fully our own, that we come from God and will return to God. Lent begins with the Ashes placed on our forehead to remind us, “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” The desert spirituality that Jesus lived and like Jesus we recognize that the purpose of our life does not lie in self-fulfillment or self-realization, but in utter dependence on God’s self-emptying love.

The Lenten desert experienced is designed to help us with our walk through every day life. There are many unasked-for desert experiences that visit us on any given day. Things like illnesses, accidents, sudden death of a loved one, unemployment. The loneliness of caring for little children, or the elderly parent. The loneliness that accompany some professions. The wilderness of a long illness or hospital stay. Through these demands though often lonely and empty can offer the opportunity to deepen our prayer life.

Willing to enter the desert of Lent can help us nurture lifelong practices that draw us to God and sustains us when we encounter unchosen deserts in our lives. In the desert we journey to unknow places with trust that God will meet us there, give us all we need and lead us to gardens of hope. Then we can emerge at Easter with renewed appreciation and gratitude for the gift we are from God and for others.

May your journey through Lent be blessed and a blessing.

Fr. Jim Brown

This article by Patricia Sharbaugh is entitled OUR DESERT PATH – Meeting God in trials, loneliness and uncertainty.

Patricia Sharbaugh PhD is associate professor of theology at St Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. She specializes in the field of biblical theology. The article is found in the Priest Magazine, Our Sunday Visitor, March 2025



LAY DIRECTORS

De Colores brothers and sisters in Christ!

“Only your personal and profound union with Christ will assure the fruitfulness of your apostolate, whatever it may be.” Fr. Jean C.J. D’Elbee

I received a wonderful book for Christmas, *I Believe in Love* by Fr. Jean C.J. D’Elbee. It is a personal retreat based on the teaching of St. Theresa of Lisieux. And WOW, just this first chapter has so much... here are some more snippets I feel compelled to share.

“Gods loved us first that we might love Him. That is the explanation of it all. He did not create us out of necessity: He did not need us. He did not create us out of justice; He owed us nothing. No, it is to His sheer love that we owe our existence.

“That first sin, rejection of an infinite love, could not be repaired by any but an infinite love.... Jesus bought a twofold right on Calvary at the price of all His Blood: the right, for Him, to love us in spite of, or even because of our sins, our unworthiness; and the right, for us, to love Him from the depths of our immense misery and to contemplate His divine attributes, including His justice, within His infinite mercy.

“Bethlehem, Nazareth, Gethsemane, Calvary, the Eucharist... My sins on Him, His Blood on me... After Gethsemane came the horrible scourging, the crowning with thorns and Calvary. Jesus looked with merciful love at those who had wounded His hands and His feet, because those wounds were the doors to Heaven- even for those who made them.”

I’m going to make this a stopping point, as I feel this is a good place to leave off for now. As we continue our Lenten season, our prayer, fasting and alms giving, I pray some of these words meld to you and help make it a more meaningful Lent.

Yours in Christ,

Karen Fritsch (kittyrg1967@gmail.com) Troy Peebles (tpeebles1007@gmail.com)



Please continue to reflect, meditate and pray about making a friend, being a friend, and inviting that friend to the June weekends. The upcoming Summer weekends are now just 3 months off which means teams will be starting their formation this month. As of now I have 2 applications and 1 possible for the men's and 3 applications for the women's weekends.

Candidate and Sponsors applications can be found on the www.Cursillo419.org web site then under The ARK & Forms tab.

Send applications to me at: EMAIL patmontgomery411@gmail.com or Mail 155 E. Keegan St. Deerfield, MI 49238 or Text 419-654-3604 or Call me 419-654-3604 and leave a message with any questions and I will call you back.
Patrick Montgomery

Our Newly Appointed Toledo Cursillo Spiritual Advisors



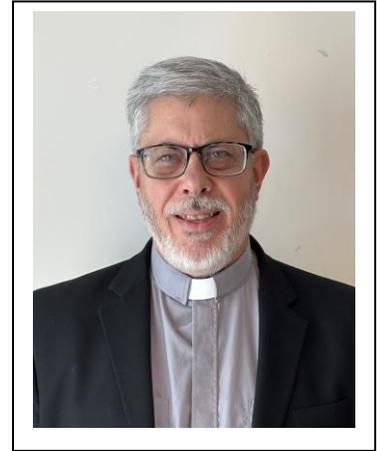
Dcn. Greg Kirk



Msgr Rev. Fr. Tad Oxley



Fr. Jim Morman



Dcn. Don Fritsch

Board of Secretariat Members

Lay Director	Karen Fritsch	Lay Director	Troy Peebles	Pre Cursillo	Pat Montgomery
Cursillo	Robert Drewior	Cursillo	Dave Zaborski	School of Leader	Shirley Fitz
School of Leaders	Diane Gutschalk	Treasurer	Steve Dandurand	Facilities	Zach Guernsey
Co Facilities	Angie Mehling	Co Facilities	Mary Lyons	Palanca	Bob & Alicia Swartzmiller
Post Cursillo	Jim & Chrissy Vasko	Hispanic Rep.	Juanita Ybanes	Communications	Judy Brickner



Greetings, can you believe it will be March and soon Spring will soon be here. If you would like to be on a Team please get your Team Applications to Dave Zaborski(dzaborski411@gmail.com) or Bob Drewior(robertdrewior774@gmail.com). For Lent I'm Praying a Rosary for everyone on Team.

Have a Peaceful Lent
Bob Drewior & Dave Zaborski



Post Cursillo

Hello to all our Cursillista brothers and sisters!

We are Jim and Chrissy Vasko, your new Post-Cursillo chairs on the Toledo Diocese secretariat. We know most of you, have worked teams with many of you, and look forward to meeting the rest. Come say "Hi!" at our next Cursillo event.

Speaking of events, we encourage you all to join us at the next Focus Day, coming up on April 18th from about 8:30am to about 3pm. Join us for a day of fun, community, and spiritual growth. The goal of the day will be to deepen our knowledge of Cursillo and our roles within it. More information coming next month!

In this monthly article, brief as it is, it will be our goal to give you a little tidbit of information each month, some you will surely know, hopefully some will be new to you...or at least a different way to look at something you already know.

Some food for thought: Do you know the role of the sponsor in the Cursillo movement? I mean, really know it? There's more to it than getting someone to the weekend. Let's talk more about that next month! See you then!

God Bless and De Colores!

Jim and Chrissy Vasko

Ultreya

Area Ultreya Information

Area 2 – Ultreyas are on the 2nd Sunday of each month, 2-3p.m. Jaeger Hall, St Clements Church.

Area 7 & 10 – The March Ultreya for the Tiffin and New Riegel Area is Sunday March 29th at 7PM in the Upper Room of St. Joseph Activity Center in Tiffin.

Area 8 Ultreya -- **Area 8 March Ultreya will be held on Sunday March 8 at 2 P.M. @ St Joe's Convocation Center in CRESTLINE!!! (not Galion where we've been meeting). All are welcome.**

Hello all fellow Cursillistas,



Think Spring! As we meet on March 21st, it will officially be spring. We will meet in the activity center/cafe of St. Michael's in Findlay, Ohio from 9am til noon. Doors will open at 830. The cafe is straight down the hall as you enter. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Diane Gutschalk as co-leader for School of Leaders. I look forward to working and collaborating with her. Jeff Hammer will provide the scripture reading and reflection. Dcn. Jerry Gubernath will present pages 188-194 from our spiritual book. Please note that Fr. Brown completed the presentation on

the Communion Rite so you may need to catch up on your reading. Betty Obringer will summarize chapters 11 and 12 from "Rediscover Jesus".

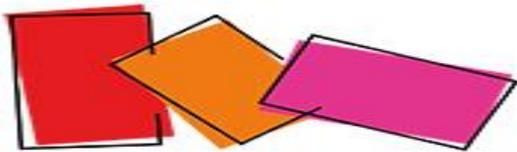
We hope to see you all there. Feel free to bring a snack to share.

DeColores,
Shirley Fitz
Diane Gutschalk

Prayer request for the last month



Paul Hutchins - passed away, Gabe Zader - cancer, Tom Ainsworth - comfort care, Abe Ledesma - kidney transplant, Gabe Zader - passed away, Annie Blum - open heart surgery, Steve Novack - passed away, Kenny - difficult time, cousin's daughter - tumor on spine, Peggy Pauly - fall, a special intention, Jennifer - inoperable lung cancer, Lila - failing health, Fr. Jerry Schetter - passed away, Mike Ruhlen - in hospital, surgery, friend's dad - in hospital



PALANCA

In Cursillo Movement, *palanca* – a Spanish word meaning “lever” – represents the prayers, sacrifices, and works of mercy we offer for others. It is the “spiritual lever” that helps lift hearts closer to God.

Recently, during a visit with a lovely woman who had just completed an Walk to Emmaus retreat, she joyfully described the peaceful grounds, delicious food, and uplifting facilitators. But what stood out most to her were the small trinkets, handwritten prayers, and little cards the candidates received throughout the weekend. Holding up her wrist to show a new charm on her bracelet, she smiled and said, “I don’t remember the word... pishka, puchta... something that begins with a P...”

“Palanca?” I asked.

Her eyes lit up. “Yes! That’s it! How do you know?!”

I couldn’t help but smile. The palanca we as 4th Dayers offer has touched countless lives – sometimes even beyond the Cursillo community. Though her retreat was not a Cursillo weekend, the spirit of palanca was alive and well.

What a beautiful reminder: when we offer prayer and sacrifice for others, God multiplies it in ways we may never fully see.

As we look ahead, please keep our March candidates and team in your prayers, offering palanca so that their hearts may be open and lifted ever closer to Him.

Peace & All Good

De Colores! ~ Alicia & Bob Swartzmiller

Start Date	End Date	Event	Location	Email Palanca To
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 81 (English)	Kalamazoo, MI	kalamazoo.palanca@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women's 62 (Spanish)	Atlanta, GA	vocalcursillo-atl@outlook.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women's Cursillo (English)	Richmond, VA	bblaws1@verizon.net
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's Cursillo (English)	Charleston, SC	amarcella1206@yahoo.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 101 (Italian)	Modena, Italy	cursillosmodena@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 273 (English)	Green Bay, WI	gbmenscursillo@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women's 1245 (Spanish)	Caguas, Puerto Rico	mariascespo1963@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 112 (English)	Orlando, FL	orlcursillopalanca@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 78 (English)	Owensboro, KY	martin.schroeder67@att.net
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 121 (English)	Covington, KY	debby@cranley.net
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women's 119 (English)	Dancyville, TN	palanca@memphiscursillo.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 185 (English)	Milwaukee, WI	milwcurcursillo.palanca@outlook.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women's Cursillo (English)	London, Ontario	johnvjr@kwic.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 136 (English)	Springfield/Cape Girardeau, MI	smcdecolores@gmail.com

2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women 44 (English)	Nyíregyháza, Hungary	feferpalanca@icloud.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 65 (English)	Scranton, PA	philpatrod1942@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 267 (Spanish)	Sacramento, CA	mccsacramento@outlook.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women's 45 (Spanish)	Providence, RI	cursillospvd@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women's 339 (Spanish/English)	Mayaguez, Puerto Rico	hajimenez1@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women's 83 (English)	Fort Wayne/South Bend, IN	fwsbcursillowomen@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Womens 126 (English)	Fort Worth, TX	ntexascurso@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Women's Cursillo (English)	Great Falls, MT	greatfallscumchristo@gmail.com
2/26/2026	3/1/2026	Men's 64 (English)	Budatétény, Hungary	ulicsak@gmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Women's 80 (English)	Owensboro, KY	martin.schroeder67@att.net
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Women's 95 (Spanish)	Mexicali/ San Luis, R.C., Mexico	silvia_al2108@hotmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Women's 106 (English)	Nashville, TN	lkelso@aol.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Men's 161 (English)	Fargo, ND	ndcursillomovementpalanca@gmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Women's 1083 (Filipino)	Los Angeles, CA	snpyp@gmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Women's 3 (English)	Kalocsa-Kecskeméti Főegyházmege, Hungary	reka@ulicsak.hu
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Men's 196 (English)	Rosemead CA	lcscpalancaletter@gmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Men's 23 (Hungarian)	Vál, Székesfehérvári Egyházmegye, Hungary	buzasy.gyorgy@gmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Men's 279 (English)	Kansas City-St Joseph, MO	cursillokcsj1962@gmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Women's 486 (Spanish)	Dallas, TX	dianabergara5@icloud.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Women's 577 (Spanish)	Amarillo, TX	mccdamarillo@gmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Men's Cursillo (Spanish)	Cuauhtémoc-Madera. Mexico	lorena_quintanav68@hotmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Men's Cursillo (English)	Bismarck, ND	bismarckcurso@gmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Men's 51 (English)	Gaylord, MI	p.oliver@mikofc.org
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Men's 223 (English)	Pittsburgh, PA	mkfleck1963@gmail.com
3/5/2026	3/8/2026	Men's 139 (English)	St. Augustine, FL	staugustinecursopalanca@gmail.com

3/6/2026	3/8/2026	Women's 475 (French)	Outaouais, Quebec	palancas.ou@gmail.com
3/7/2026	3/7/2026	Diocesan Ultreya (Spanish)	Sacramento, CA	mccsacramento@outlook.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Women's 120 (English)	Orlando, FL	orlcursillopalanca@gmail.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Women's 87 (English)	Laredo, TX	palancas.laredocursilloenglish@gmail.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Women's 197 (English)	Rosemead, CA	lcscpalancaletter@gmail.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Women's 148 (English)	Birmigham, AL	matyavila@hotmail.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Men's 331 (English)	Manchester, NH	Palanca@nhcursillo.org
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Men's 425 (English)	Detroit, MI	detroitpalanca@gmail.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Men's 41 (English)	Nyiregyhaza, Hungary	feferpalanca@icloud.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Men's 31 (Spanish)	Washinton, DC	Precursillowashingtondc@gmail.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Men's 105 (English)	Fort Wayne/South Bend, IN	fwsbmencursillo@gmail.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Women's March 2026 Cursillo (English)	San Pedro-Orlando, FL	smithlewdoris@icloud.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Women's 137 (English)	St. Augustine, FL	staugustinecursillopalanca@gmail.com
3/12/2026	3/15/2026	Men's 147 (English)	Joliet, IL	Rickktrainor@gmail.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Women's 280 (English)	Kansas City-St Joseph, MO	cursillokcsj1962@gmail.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Men's 224 (English)	New York, NY	jimsantos0624@gmail.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Spring Women's Cursillo (English)	Crookston, MN	crookstoncursillo@gmail.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Women's 137 (English)	Springfield-Cape Girardeau, MI	smcdecolores@gmail.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Women's 106 (English)	Evansville, IN	cwilzbacher@gmail.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Men's Cursillo (English)	Boston, MA	bostonpalanca@yahoo.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Women's 738 (Spanish)	Orange County, CA	ysn_simental@yahoo.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Women's Cursillo (English)	Bismarck, ND	bismarckcursillo@gmail.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Woman's 224 (English)	Pittsburgh, PA	mkfleck1963@gmail.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Women's 52 (English)	Gaylord, MI	p.oliver@mikofc.org
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Men's 122 (English)	Tahi, Hungary	kondasjudit79@gmail.com

3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Women's 186 (English)	Milwaukee, WI	milwcursillo.palanca@outlook.com
3/19/2026	3/22/2026	Men's 74 (Spanish)	Tyler, TX	escueladedirigentes.tyler@gmail.com
3/26/2026	3/29/2026	Women's Cursillo (Spanish)	Ciudad Obregon, Sonora, Mexico	irma.consq@gmail.com

Witness: *Let us know how God is working in your life email to – judbrick616@gmail.com*

Current openings on Secretariat



For your information and reflection -- there are several positions on Secretariat that will be opening for replacements—

There will be upcoming positions opening

The current position holders will be with you one year to familiarize you with the service position you assume/step into.

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!

'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.

