Unexpected Opportunities
by Jack Foster

When I was asked to write an inspirational article for the Tripod, I wondered who it would be I’d inspire—you or me. Hmmmm. Hopefully both of us. For 10 days, I recorded all my thoughts about Cursillo and my fourth day. Here’s the result.

Are you in a reunion group? I love mine! We meet every Saturday morning at 7:30am at Burger King. Burger King? Sure. At that time of day all the business is drive thru. Each Friday I reflect on God in my life during the week, to be able to share in reunion the next morning. I’m excited when I wake up on Saturday morning. Is that crazy? Maybe, but still I am. I like to think at reunion group I’m the real me! There aren’t too many places you can share your spiritual life. Sometimes on the way to group I remember God experiences during the week, events I would probably never have remembered otherwise. So reunion for me is a recalling of my relationship with Christ for the past week.

How do you see yourself as a Christian? A child of God? Redeemed? A fourth day Cursillista? What’s your self-image? Who are you in your own mind? Who does the Bible say you are? Who do your closest friends say you are? Who does God say you are? Who can you tell this to? Find someone you’re comfortable with and with whom you can speak your honest mind, your truest thoughts, your biggest fears, your greatest joys, your most intimate musings. For me, that’s Reunion Group! There are five in the group, all from different backgrounds and faith experiences, but all together committed to sharing our Christian lives in a spirit of confidentiality.

My reunion group is my proving ground, my practice game, my getting ready for the big stage. It prepares me for all the situations in my daily life where a word about faith may be helpful. It’s where I practice expressing my faith.

And after we’ve practiced we’re ready for opportunities to witness for Jesus that come at the most unexpected time and places. The moment to witness can come anywhere—at the beach, in church school, with a relative, with a stranger. You don’t need the words to witness for Jesus, just the heart. God provides the words. Expect the unusual. Expect a hole in one.

Day of Renewal
Saturday, February 23, 2013
9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
Church of The Good Shepherd
164 Newton Road
Acton, MA 01720
Cost: $25
Price includes lunch & Church rental fee.

Continued to page 2
Some of my best experiences to witness for Christ have been spontaneous. Sometimes the flow of conversation naturally leads to a comment on God’s love for us or our personal faith. A relative of mine criticized all the bad things Christians have done over the centuries, quoting from a book by an atheist. I found myself blurting out “That’s why we need a savior. Even at our best we fall short.” Who would ever have thought I’d be talking to him about Jesus.

Jesus is God’s son sent into the world to redeem us. Now that’s exciting! It cuts through all the differences in churches, traditions, and styles of worship. It unites us in the worldwide Body of Christ. That simple understanding became more clear to me in a two minute conversation with my niece as we walked through Downtown Crossing! A man was passing out fliers for Jews for Jesus. She thought he must see Jesus as a prophet. Not just a prophet, I felt. Anyone who sees Jesus as the unique son of God and follows him is a Christian, no matter what their background. That’s the basic truth of our faith.

As Cursillistas we carry a special badge, a commission to influent the world around us for Jesus. Be ready for the unexpected opportunity, where our Lord will guide you to situations where you can honor him in words or actions. You may surprise even yourself! And isn’t that the most honest expression of our faith—responding in real life situations with what’s really on our hearts? In truth, influencing our environments for Christ can have two faces—the one where we plan our apostolic actions, and the other where God leads us naturally into moments of faith and action. With open hearts, we can expect to be surprised at what God does with us.

Reflect this month on your experiences with Jesus, and how you’re sharing them in your world. Be open for an unexpected opportunity.

Participate in Reunion and Ultreya as you prepare for the moments when God will use you. If you need a new Reunion format card, give me a ring (508-378-4818) or drop me a line at jfoster103@verizon.net. Be part of a group where you can be yourself, express yourself, honor Jesus, and prepare for our Lord to continue to use you in your fourth day.

“Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children” ~ Ephesians 5:1 NIV

Report from the National Episcopal Cursillo Conference

This year the conference was held in Orlando Florida. John Michael Talbot was the Keynote Speaker and had a conference in the hotel Saturday night.

New NECC Clergy Representative

During the conference Rev Eddie Alleyn was elected as the Northeast Clergy Representative replacing Rev Rick Simpson who term on the NECC ended. Rev. Eddie Alleyn will be the Representative on the NECC for the Diocese of MA. He should begin to communicate with our Lay Director, Donna Tolley.

NEC Office

The office is currently located in Myrtle Beach, NC and is staffed by Sue Davis who has served in that capacity for 20 years. As a cost cutting measure, the NECC voted at the Conference to close the National Office no later than April, 2013. There is a sub-committee working on the mechanics of locating space for the office, perhaps a church facility. This will be a major under-

Continued from page 1

Continued to page 3
taking. We need to locate a facility to store and preserve all our previous files. We also need to find a facility to store our supplies we sell and keep them available near Sue so she can ship the materials when purchased.

Sue will retire in April 2014. We will be looking to find someone in the movement willing to take on the office work as a ministry in which case the office will be relocated.

NEC Conference for 2013
The Conference will be held in Chicago at the Hyatt October 24–27, 2013. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. It’s a great opportunity to meet your Cursillo brothers and sisters from all over the country.

I trust you all had a joyous holiday and are ready to move into the new year resolved to participate more fully in the Cursillo movement.

Alan Rogers, NEC Layman Representative for the Northeast

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”
— 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV

2012 Outstanding Paul Harris Award of Citizenship
Presented to William Webb by Reading Rotary Club

I wish to personally thank the Lord for connections of the entire Cursillo community with their love and support of my 27 years of Fourth Day and my January 1985 Cursillo weekend at the Marist House.

On June 28, 2012, I was presented the Paul Harris Citizen Award for 48 years of service to the Town of Reading with recognition of 22 years of teaching thousands of students, 26 years of caring for the sick and elderly as caregiver of many Reading residents, 42 years of church ministry from the Church of the Good Shepherd, 30 of them as licensed lay minister and family contributions to numerous Reading services.

I fill the lives of others with compassion, love, sincerity and generosity. I reach out to the poor, bereaved, sick, hungry and neglected in my Fourth Day in caring, church ministry, gifted daily card ministry, visits and calls. I’ve attended 65 Faith Alive weekends the last 34 years serving on 63 teams in 12 states, with two at Good Shepherd.

The timeliness of the award was that Alice and I were celebrating our 42nd anniversary that same week.

A Reading citizen gave this verse to me just before my Cursillo weekend for the book I wrote “Feather in Your Cap” dedicated to eleven of my former students who died early in their journeys.

DeColores, Bill

Live For Today
I’ll never see this day again
The seconds or the hours
Now’s the time to take the time
To stop and smell the flowers
Today’s the day to give that smile
And happiness away
That you were saving for a friend
Some rainy, gloomy day,
This day is golden, priceless
God made this day for you,
The deed you do for someone else
May just come back to you
So touch a heart, hold a hand
Call or write that lonely friend
Don’t postpone the love you have
This day won’t come again.
—Author unknown

Ultreya!
Cursillo needs your help!

Many things have changed over the past couple of years, with the canceling of the last few weekends and fewer Cursillistas getting involved. I feel we haven’t communicated well to the community. We have had to find a new location to hold weekends. All in all, participation in the activities of our community has dwindled. Your Secretariat knows we have some work to do, and want you on board.

Here’s the scoop:
• We need three individuals to fill the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Lay Director on the Secretariat. As you can see, we now have six members of the nine expected. Could you be one of these?
• We need a clergy person to join the Secretariat for spiritual support. (The bylaws say we can have three, but we’re not selfish!)
• In addition to these Secretariat needs, the Servant Community needs someone who’s computer minded to take over the electronic mailing of the Tripod.
• We also need a few creative hands to help plan the Annual Meeting in April.

So that’s the story. The Bible says the Lord has assigned to each a task. As we go through this challenging time, the words of Paul hearten me: –

“The person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful.”

~ 1 Cor. 12:5-10 (The Message)

Is one of these roles for you? If so, please contact me at 508-888-9337 or email spydah714@verizon.net

Donna Tolley, your servant in our Lord

Ultreya!

Massachusetts Episcopal Cursillo

Day of Renewal

February 23, 2013

9:00am – 4:00pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

164 Newton Road

Acton, MA 01720

I wish to attend the Day of Renewal scheduled for February 23, 2013, I understand the total cost for the day is $25.00.

[ ] I have enclosed the full amount $25.00
[ ] I have enclosed a deposit of $10.00 and will pay the balance of $15.00 on that day.

Please send this completed form and a check payable to MEC- Renewal Day to:

MEC- Day of Renewal

c/o Karla Semeter

12 Andover Street

Brockton, MA 02302

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________

Email address: ________________________________________

Home Phone: __________________________ Gender ( circle one): M  F

Parish: _____________________________________________

Located in: _________________________________________

I made my Cursillo at: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Dietary concerns( if any):____________________________________

__________________________________________________________

Handicap limitations ( if any):________________________________

__________________________________________________________

www.masscursillo.org
Servant Community Update!

Several members of our Servant Community and Secretariat met on September 8th at Trinity Church in Canton to hear a very thought-provoking presentation led by the Reverend Robert Outman-Conant. It focused on the well-being and future RENEWAL of Cursillo in our diocese. It was interspersed with very lively, helpful and relevant discussion.

The sharing that ensued was very poignant, enabling each of us to share what we envision for our future. Although there were various thoughts and feelings pertaining to the issues, it was unanimous that our Weekends and subsequent Fourth Day activities have enhanced our lives and given us the tools, direction and love to live our lives to God’s Glory. This may mean that even though we are not personally aware of all of our past candidates environments, we can safely assume that by virtue of living their Cursillo Weekends, they are very likely evangelizing their individual environments and sharing God’s Word and Grace.

Many splendid ideas were talked about that may be useful to us as a Christian Community in Action and bring renewed interest and commitment into the life of MEC. The Secretariat always welcomes all ideas and thoughts you may have in order to help us move forward in being a friend and bringing that friend closer to Christ. Remember—Christ is counting on you!

If you would like to read the proposal presented to us at the meeting, please contact Karla Semeter at md1961@verizon.net

TYTY, J!
Binki Wright
Servant Community Coordinator

Ultreya!

“He will give: beauty for ashes; joy instead of mourning; praise instead of heaviness.”

~ Isaiah 61:3, TLB

In memoriam

Shirley Zarella has passed away. She made her Cursillo at MEC #4 on November 1977 and served on Team in May 1980. Her husband, Al, was also a Cursillista making his weekend in March 1986. They were active at St. Anne’s Episcopal Church in North Billerica. Their son, Normand, made his Cursillo in March 1996.

Day of Renewal

February 23, 2013
9:00-4:00
$25.00 pp
Church of the Good Shepherd, Acton, MA

Massachusetts Episcopal Cursillo®, Friends of Cursillo Donation Card

Yes, I want to support the work of the Massachusetts Episcopal Cursillo®.

I (we) hereby pledge: $500.00 $200.00 $100.00 $50.00 $25.00 Other $ ____________

To be paid: ( ) annually ( ) quarterly ( ) monthly Amount enclosed ____________

To help fund the work of the Massachusetts Episcopal Cursillo®

( ) This donation is for the calendar year January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013

Name: ____________________________

Address: __________________________

Phone: ____________________________ Email: ____________________________

Church and Town: __________________________

Please complete this form and return to: Barbara Wight, Acting Treasurer, 68 Courier St., S Weymouth, MA 02190

Checks should be made payable to MEC with “Friends of Cursillo” in the memo and on the envelope.

www.masscursillo.org
A big bag of wheat
by Dave Greene

I once heard a story about a poor farmer going to market carrying a big bag of wheat over his shoulder. As he was walking down the road, a fine carriage approached him. The door of the carriage opened and the King of the land emerged and asked the farmer where he was going and what he had in his bag. The poor farmer replied, “I am on my way to market with some fine wheat that I grew on my own small plot of land, your majesty.” The King then asked him, “May I have some of your fine wheat?” The farmer replied, “Of course, your majesty.” He then reached into his bag and pulled out one grain of wheat and handed it to the king. The king thanked the man and then reached into his own large bag that was sitting on the seat of his carriage, and pulled out one shiny, solid gold coin and handed it to the farmer. As the farmer looked at the coin wistfully the king got back into his carriage and rode off. As the farmer looked at the retreating carriage, he wondered to himself, “What would have happened if I had given the king the whole bag of wheat?”

How much of the “wheat” are we giving to God? He has blessed us abundantly in many ways, whether we know it or not. Even our difficulties can strengthen us and help us grow closer to Him. They may also become a tool we will later use to help others in His service. Yes, this life is busy, and many things call for our attention, but how many of these, “things we just have to do” are something that will have an eternal significance? I often notice people’s yards, and how they sometimes become more unkempt as the owners age. Why is this? Many times, it is because as age creeps up on us, we realize that all the work and time serve no real purpose in the greater scheme of things. I know I find myself spending hours on the computer for purely superficial reasons. Then, I complain about not having enough time to do the things I need to do. What are some of the things that are preventing YOU from becoming a more useful Christian, and a tool able to be more fully utilized by God?

During this time of New Year’s resolutions, let us commit ourselves more fully to His service, and resolve to do a better job of furthering His kingdom as we live the life that He has given us. When my time on this earth is done and I come before the Lord, I want to hear, “well done, good and faithful servant.” What do you want to hear?

Ultreya!

The Area Contact Persons are representatives of various parishes in the Diocese who keep the members of Cursillo aware of activities and also are used to contact nearby parishes who have no Contact Person. Any Cursillista who wishes to be the Contact Person for their parish should contact Donna Tolley, the Area Contact Coordinator. (see page 2)

The Servant Community is a Christian Community in action where various members have specific support functions for all of our programs. The Servant Community works in support of the Secretariat. All Cursillistas are members of the Servant Community. If anyone wishes to be involved, they should contact Binki Wright, the Servant Community Coordinator at 978-263-0234 or email rewright599@comcast.net

The Webmasters are responsible to the Secretariat by keeping the Website up to date. If anyone has any comments on the Website, please contact the Lay Director. You may contact the Webmasters for www.maccsursillo.org at: webmasters@masscurillo.org

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