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# NEWSLETTER

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Filipino Cursillo Movement of San Diego, CA | Volumn XLII, Issue 1 | Oct 2023



## **“CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW MEMBERS”**

*St Charles says  
“Welcome”*

First of all, lets welcome the three new members of the secretariat.

Bro. Carl Mascarenas - Newsletter Editor

Sis. Siena Dinh - Asst Lay Director

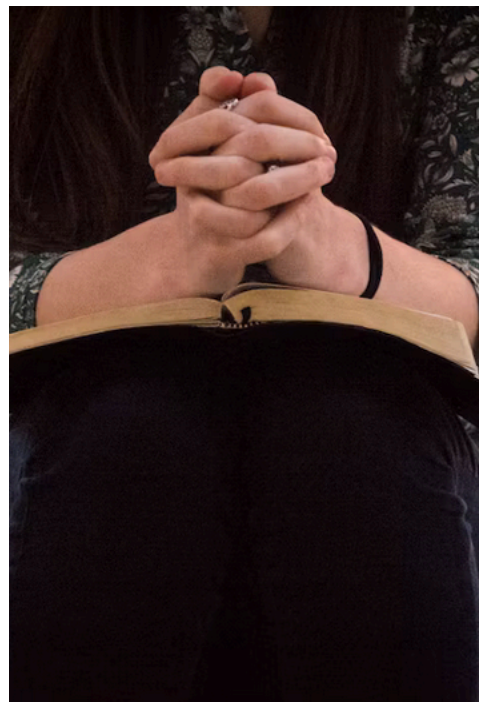
Sis. Hedy Magallanes - Treasurer

Let us join in prayer that God will bless these servants of His who have been chosen for the ministry of service, so that they may preach Jesus Christ and give glory to our Father in heaven through their work in the Filipino Cursillo Movement. Amen.

*On Sept 10th 2023 at the Diocesan Ultreya, Mark Villas gave his lay witness talk. We are fortunate that Mark is willing to share his talk on the news letter.*

### Lay Witness Talk - By Bro. Mark Villas

*Good afternoon, Brothers and Sisters. My name is Brother Mark Villas. I am from the parishes of St. Mary in National City and St. Michael in Paradise Hills. I lived my Cursillo in June 2013, Class No. 109, and my Decuria is St. John. I'm sure you can imagine my anxiety in delivering this lay witness to be heightened in these past weeks since we had to postpone our Ultreya due to the recent hurricane watch. And even as I stepped out of the house this morning, I felt a few raindrops and thought, "Oh no, Lord, not again.."*



*My lay witness this afternoon is partly inspired by a recent pilgrimage in Europe I took part in just about a month ago. I was one of six young adults among the South Bay parishes (five of us Cursillistas and one soon-to-be Cursillista) who joined the 1.5 million people at this year's celebration of World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, to see Pope Francis. Thanks be to God by His divine providence, we were able to see the Holy Father face-to-face, being that our hotel was just one block over from where he was staying. Greeting Pope Francis as he arrived in Lisbon was probably one of the most exhilarating moments of this trip. However, it was not until the latter half of our excursion where I felt my own personal faith had come full circle.*

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*After World Youth Day, our group embarked on a Marian pilgrimage: first to the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, which was just an hour away, and then to Our Lady of Lourdes. My visit to these shrines both proved to be enlightening and spiritually-enriching.*

**MATTHEW 18-20**

## Continue Of Lay Witness Talk - By Bro. Mark Villas

*As a liturgical musician in particular, it is inspiring to hear these anthems that we sing often in church and attribute them to its origin. From the “Ave, Ave, Ave Maria...” that you would hear in Fatima, to “Immaculate Mary, your praises we sing...” in Lourdes, you develop a greater appreciation of the tradition and culture that is rooted in our Catholic faith. This is the Catholic music nerd in me speaking.*

*Of the two shrines, however, I felt more prayerful and spiritually-uplifted in Lourdes. We experienced a night procession with the recitation of the Holy Rosary in various languages, as well as the water gesture, where we were able to bless ourselves with holy water. But I was most moved when we entered the basilica. I sat in a pew in the back, praying quietly before the Blessed Sacrament. At that moment, I felt this sudden warmth consuming my entire being. Many things were running through my head: work that I had to finish; future endeavors that I want to pursue; the intentions of my family and friends back home; not to mention, how was I going to fit all the pasalubong in my luggage to take home? I thought at first that it may have been the humid climate surrounding us, but no; if you can imagine it, I felt at that moment as if my soul was receiving this big hug from the Lord. I felt peace within me. It was then that my late parents came to mind: the thought of them looking down on me from heaven, and reassuring me that everything was alright. With that, I succumbed to tears falling down my face. My prayer that day was to thank God for the gift of life, and for the strong faith attributed to my parents that has shaped me to the man of faith that I am today.*

*My faith in God derives from humble, yet unconventional beginnings. I am the eldest of four children in my family, raised in a single-parent home. My mother passed away unexpectedly when I was only four years old. I can remember one late night my brother and I were awakened by our dad and rushed into the car to drive to the emergency room. It was there that we found out that our mom had died from complications of asthma, while also being seven-months pregnant with my two twin sisters.*

## Continue Of Lay Witness Talk - By Bro. Mark Villas

*My sisters survived their delivery through postmortem C-section. In an instant, my father had lost his wife, now left to raise four young children on his own. And as if time were not of the essence, this all occurred on the day of my dad's 39th birthday. July 6 will always be a special day for our family, celebrating the birthday of my sisters and our dad, as well as the death anniversary of our mom.*

*Growing up, my dad worked practically seven days a week to provide for our livelihood. With help and support from our nannies, whom we had grown to call as our Lolo and Lola, as well as my dad's close friends or barkada, we managed to live in what seemed to be a normal upbringing. The saying goes that it takes a village to raise a child, and that was exactly the case for our family. These select people were instrumental in planting those first seeds of faith in us. As young children, the four of us were baptized on the same day at St. Michael Church in Paradise Hills. We continued our formation and eventually received the remaining Sacraments of Initiation at St. Mary Church in National City. Our "village" made sure that we attended our Religious Education classes each week and Mass on Sundays. As we got older, my dad, despite his busy schedule, saw to it that we made it to our assignments as altar servers, as well as meetings for Youth Group and Boy Scouts.*

*Following high school, my siblings and I became more independent, but continued to serve in different capacities in church. This gave my dad the opportunity to do more things that he wanted to pursue for himself. I, myself, took on more leadership roles in the parish, serving as a catechist, Youth Group leader, altar server coordinator, Troop Scoutmaster, and Sacristan. I joined the music ministry, primarily as a choir member and cantor. By God's grace, I discovered my love for the piano and honed my skills with little formal instruction. Today, I work full time in music and liturgy at three different parishes.*





## Continue Of Lay Witness Talk - By Bro. Mark Villas

*myself daily is, "I will, if He wills." If this is what God wants for me, then His will be done. This service to God, I believe, is what led me to living my Cursillo weekend ten years ago. Since then, Cursillo has become my way of life and has given me greater perspective in my faith, in my relationship with Christ, and my being the best version of myself to other people.*

*My faith in God continues to grow every day, to the point where it is almost difficult to deny His presence in my life. He has revealed Himself to me in the good moments of my life as well as those moments that have been difficult. Such is the case a few years ago in 2019. On the morning of March 20<sup>th</sup>, I found my father in his bedroom, unresponsive and not breathing. I called 911, and the operator instructed me to lay him flat on the floor and begin chest compressions. As I pulled him off the bed, I noticed that he was wearing a small medallion on his chest. As I began the compressions, I noticed that this medallion was not attached to any chained necklace. This piece was simply lying face down on my dad's chest. When I flipped the medallion over, there was a picture of the Santo Niño or the Infant Child on it. At that, I began to break down in tears, because I knew at that moment that my dad was officially gone. It took me several months to a year for the reality to sink in. I would tell myself that he was at work, or at the casino, or out with friends.*

*Though this brought much pain and suffering to our family, I never once doubted the presence of God in the moment. In fact, I felt His presence more and more surrounding the death of my father. I am convinced that my dad passed the night before on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Our study tells us that March 19<sup>th</sup> is the Feast of St. Joseph. St. Joseph is the patron saint of fathers, as well as the patron saint of happy death. In addition, with my dad's death being on a Wednesday, his 40<sup>th</sup> day happened to land on Divine Mercy Sunday. Not to mention on these particular days (Wednesday and Sunday), we meditate on the Glorious Mysteries of the Holy Rosary, remembering the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. [So if anyone here is planning their fifth day, Wednesday is a good day.]*

*Are these instances just strange coincidences? Maybe, they could be. Regardless, these little revelations were enough to give me peace in knowing that my dad was in a better place. Just*

### Continue Of Lay Witness Talk - By Bro. Mark Villas

*like the passing of my mom, there was a “village” that also helped us find peace in the passing of my dad: those of the parish community, fellow Cursillistas, and close friends and relatives. I believe that most people in my situation would have left the Church a long time ago, or find themselves angry with God. But as I said, my faith in God did not leave any room for doubt or resentment. He never left us to be alone. Instead of walking away from Him, it gave me a reason to run to Him and be in His constant embrace.*

*It is quite timely that last Sunday’s Gospel was about the walking on the water and having faith in the Son of God. In our own faith journey, I feel that Jesus is always calling us out of the boat and witness the miracle of walking with Him. As Cursillistas, I truly believe that we are all miracle workers. We see miracles every day in our lives, whether big or small. We are well aware that these miracles come from our Lord, and we are called to be a miracle to others. That is the whole premise of P.S.A. – Piety, Study, Action. We witness miracles; we come to know the source of that goodness, and we share that miracle with others. I know in my heart of hearts, the Lord has not failed me, and I do not intend to let Him down either. The legacy of my parents gives me and my family enough strength and courage to keep walking on our faith journey.*

Amen!



## Cursillo Leaders Program - By Sis. Lot Sigarlaki



The Cursillo Leaders Program was held on two Saturdays, Sept 30, 2023 and October 7, 2023 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. It was such a joy to see all our brothers and sisters who showed up to know more of our movement, to grow spiritually and to lend support to one another. As usual, there's wonderful food and warm camaraderie when cursillistas gather together. There were about 30 attendees each in both days. This was the first Cursillo Leaders Program after 3 years.

On both days, after praying the Cursillo Leaders' Prayer, we shared our PSA's followed by listening to two technic talks given by the School of Leaders and Secretariat members and one doctrinal talk given by a clergy followed by lunch and another technic talk and one doctrinal talk in the afternoon. There was opportunity for Question and Answers. The day ended up with a visit to the Blessed Sacrament followed by a blessing.

First talk on Sept 30 was the history, strategy, mentality and methodology of the Cursillo (FEEL (Find, Enlighten, Evangelize and Link) presented by Bro Ramon and Sis Marie Dela Cruz, members of the School of Leaders. Pre Cursillo phase (Find) was presented by Bro Art Teodosio, co chair of Pre Cursillo. Fr Vic Maristela, Spiritual Advisor, did the talk on Developing the mind of the Church with the Mind of Christ. The afternoon talk on Cursillo Proper (Enlighten, Evangelize) was presented by Bro Nathan Montemayor, co chair of the committee followed by Called and Gifted talk given by Deacon Dave Lewis, Assistant Spiritual Advisor. Moderator is Sis Siena Dinh.

On October 7, 2023, morning talks include Post Cursillo phase (Link) was presented by the two chair persons: Sis Cathy Embalsado and Sis Tess Mallorca, Secretariat and School of Leaders talk by Bro Nelson Salazar, co chair for School of Leaders and Ministerial Spirituality by Fr Vic Maristela. After a sumptuous lunch, Sis Lot Sigarlaki, co chair for School of Leaders, presented the summary of the rollos, followed a talk on the Essence and Task of Leadership by Fr Roger Pingol, Associate Pastor of St Mary's Church, National City. Moderator is Sis Arla Florendo.

Attending the CLP and being with our brothers and sisters in Christ was a reminder about the significance of friendship through the Cursillo method; friendship with Christ and friendship with one another. Our Cursillo made it possible to have a deeper awareness of the great love of God to each and every one of us, how to grow in that love expressed in our piety, through our study and carried out through our actions! May we always continue to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth! De Colores!