
NEWSLETTER

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A Sacred Season Begins: The Faithful Embrace the Holy Time of Lent

February 18, 2026 | Filipino Cursillo of San Diego

Today, on Ash Wednesday, millions of Catholics around the world begin their solemn journey through the season of Lent. As the faithful receive ashes upon their foreheads in the sign of the cross, they are reminded of the ancient words: *“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”* This sacred season of forty days, stretching from Ash Wednesday to the Easter Triduum, invites every Catholic to turn away from sin, draw closer to Christ, and open their hearts to the transforming grace of God. In a world often consumed by noise and distraction, Lent offers a profound invitation to silence, reflection, and spiritual renewal.

At the heart of the Lenten observance stand three sacred pillars: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These ancient disciplines, rooted in Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Church, are not mere rituals but pathways to deeper union with God. Through prayer, the faithful open their souls to the voice of the Lord and seek His guidance in all things. Through fasting, they discipline the body, making room for the spirit to flourish and reminding themselves of their dependence on God alone. Through almsgiving, they extend the love of Christ to those in need, embodying the mercy and compassion that Jesus calls every disciple to practice.



The three pillars of Lent: Fasting, Praying, and Almsgiving.

The Church teaches that Lent is a time of penance and conversion, a season in which Catholics are called to examine their consciences and turn back to the Lord with all their hearts. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that the interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various forms, and that Scripture and the Fathers of the Church especially emphasize these three: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. This season is modeled on the forty days Christ spent in the desert, where He fasted and prayed before beginning His public ministry. In following His example, the faithful prepare themselves to celebrate the great mystery of His Passion, Death, and Resurrection at Easter.

Parishes across the country and around the globe will mark this holy season with special devotions, including the Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic Adoration, and additional opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Many Catholic communities also organize fish fries on Fridays during Lent, honoring the tradition of abstinence from meat while building fellowship among parishioners. Bishops and pastors have encouraged the faithful to make this Lent a time of genuine spiritual growth, urging families to pray together, attend daily Mass when possible, and practice acts of charity that bring the love of Christ into their neighborhoods and communities.

Pope Leo has consistently reminded the faithful that Lent is not about empty sacrifice, but about opening our hearts to God's love and allowing that love to overflow into the lives of others. In his Lenten messages, the Holy Father has called on Catholics to resist indifference and to walk alongside the poor, the suffering, and the marginalized. This year, as the Church enters this penitential season, the call to mercy and compassion rings out with particular urgency, inviting all believers to see the face of Christ in every person they encounter and to respond with generous, self-giving love.

As the ashes are placed and the Lenten journey begins anew, the Catholic faithful are reminded that this is a season of hope. Though the road through Lent passes through the shadow of the Cross, it leads ultimately to the glorious light of Easter morning. Every act of sacrifice, every moment spent in prayer, and every gift of charity offered during these forty days draws the soul closer to the Risen Christ. May this Lent be a time of deep spiritual renewal for all who undertake it, and may the grace of God accompany every step of the journey from ashes to alleluia.

✠ Blessed Lent to all the faithful. ✠

Rollista Formation Workshop

Article by Sis Siena Dinh



On February 7th, approximately forty Cursillistas gathered at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Rancho Penasquitos to grow in faith. Not only did present Cursillistas want to learn, but they were all open to the possibility of one day (just maybe!) becoming a rollista for the Filipino Cursillo Movement of the Diocese of San Diego.

The day began with fellowship and breakfast. One of the Cursillo Movement's charisms is friendship, so eating, laughing, and group sharing is standard for nearly all our events. Fr. Crispin Costales kicked off the Rollista Formation Workshop by illuminating the purpose of clergy rollos during the 3-Day Weekend. Fr. Crispin used the principle of St. Thomas Aquinas, "Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it (*Gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit*)," to guide us while reviewing Sanctifying/Habitual Grace, Actual/Sacramental Grace, Obstacles to Grace, and Life in Grace. Fr. Crispin also introduced us to two different kinds of time: *chronos* and *kairos*. By the end of his presentation, the group was humbled by the generosity of God's Grace despite our imperfections and the availability of His grace through the Sacraments of the Church. While sin exists and is a barrier between us and grace, we have a good and loving God who is always ready to forgive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Fr. Crispin also showed us the fruits of living on *kairos* because he had just come from celebrating Mass, made time to visit and speak with us, and went straight to another parish to hear confessions. If it is for God and the will of God, He will provide.



Sis Lot Sigarlaki continued the workshop by revealing how each component of the 3-Day Weekend serves as a piece of a puzzle that, when thoughtfully assembled together, will show the purpose of the Cursillo Movement. What is the purpose of the Cursillo? The Movement's purpose very much aligns with the mission of the Universal Church: for every Christian to be salt for the earth and light for the world. We are to grow in our Piety, Study, and Action so that we may become Leaders and share the love of Christ to all we encounter.

After a break, I followed Sis Lot's insightful presentation to weave our portions together and appeal to the hearts of Cursillistas that were present. I also appeal to any Cursillista reading this article: we are in need of rollistas for our movement and one way you can fulfill our shared vocation of evangelization is to deliver a rollo for upcoming Cursillo classes. I shared the rollo mentoring process and how it involves several resources and regular meetings with a mentor. Common anxieties such as voice volume and eye contact are things we can practice in front of our mentor and small worries we can offer to God throughout rollo preparation. One way the 3-Day Weekend is effective is because of the unique rollistas God calls to serve. We don't need to fit a certain mold in order to touch the minds and hearts of candidates during their weekend. It is best to have rollistas from different stages in life with various styles of delivery.



Sis Bea Herrera came to the podium after me and shared a wonderful witness that rollo mentoring can be convenient with the help of technology and “passing” (receiving approval from the Faculty to deliver a rollo) is very much achievable as she successfully delivered her first rollo for Women’s Class 122 at Quinta De Guadalupe in 2025. Most of all, Sis Bea shared her initial reasons for waiting many, many years before delivering a rollo. Reasons of delay ranged from family life to being shy and more, but the Lord kept tapping at her heart. Sis Bea said “yes” to becoming a rollista and dedicated time to study the rollo on Piety.

The workshop ended with quiet reflection and an opportunity to sign up for rollos of interest. It was exciting to see many willing and willing to share. Fr. Crispin’s presentation reminded us that Sanctifying/Habitual Grace is freely given. We don’t even need to ask and we never need to earn God’s love. Sis Lot helped us realize the Cursillo is like an artwork where everyone has a contribution and we need Cursillistas willing to be part of God’s masterpiece during the 3-Day Weekend. We place our trust in God that He will provide what is needed for our Filipino Cursillo Movement. We are grateful for Cursillistas like Sis Bea, who don’t let previous years of less participation hinder God’s invitation to give more. Let us empty our cup, allow grace in, and take action. There is no better time than kairos (in His time).

Filipino Cursillo of San Diego Christmas Party

December 2025



The Filipino Cursillo of San Diego Christmas party was SO much fun this year! The hall was decked out with the most beautiful decorations — a big sparkling Christmas tree on stage, a gorgeous red “Merry Christmas and Happy New Year” banner, and of course, you know we had to have a parol hanging up there to give it that true Filipino Christmas feel. Everyone showed up wearing red and green, Santa hats, the whole works. The place was packed and the energy was just amazing from the moment you walked in!

Okay, but let me tell you about the FOOD. The food was out of this world! You already know that when Filipinos throw a party, nobody is going home hungry. And guess what — they had a whole lechon! I’m talking golden, crispy skin, fall-off-the-bone tender meat — the real deal! People were lining up and going back for seconds and thirds, no shame at all. On top of that, there were huge trays of pancit, rice dishes, all kinds of ulam, fresh fruits, Biscoff cookies, and so many homemade goodies that the buffet table was practically overflowing. My plate was so full I had to make two trips, and I regret nothing!

The entertainment was just beautiful. There was this amazing choir of women — they all came out in matching red skirts and these gorgeous Filipino-inspired tops, and when they started singing Christmas carols, oh my heart! Their voices were incredible and the harmonies gave me chills. They sang song after song, and the whole hall was just soaking it all in. And the band? They kept the party going all night long with keyboards, guitars, the whole setup. You could tell everyone was having the best time just singing along and clapping.

Bro Jesse and Sis Hedy Magallanes dressed up as Joseph and Mary for a live Nativity scene! Bro Jesse had the shepherd’s staff, the robes, everything, and Sis Hedy looked so lovely in her blue and white Mary costume. It was such a sweet and meaningful moment that reminded all of us what Christmas is

really about. You could feel the reverence in the room, but also so much love and joy. That's what I love about our Cursillo community — we know how to celebrate AND keep our faith at the center of it all.

At the end of the night, we all gathered up on stage for a big group photo, and honestly, looking at that picture with everyone smiling in their red and green outfits in front of the Christmas tree — it just warms my heart. This community is like family, and nights like these remind you how blessed we are to have each other. The food was incredible, the music was beautiful, the Nativity was so touching, and the laughter and love filled every corner of that hall. I'm already looking forward to next year! Maligayang Pasko to our Filipino Cursillo family — you guys really know how to throw a Christmas party!

DeColores!

Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon!

Filipino Cursillo of San Diego • December 2025

Lay Witness

Brother Deacon David Lewis

Good afternoon brothers and sisters, my name is Brother Deacon David Lewis. I lived my Cursillo at Quinta de Guadalupe in July 2008 Class 101, my DeCuria is San Lorenzo Ruiz. I have been assigned to Saint Charles since my ordination, and have served as your assistant spiritual director for around the last ten years.

What led me here can really be broken into three parts: What led me to come to the Catholic church? What led me to the diaconate? And what led me to Cursillo?

First it began in a suburb of Rochester, NY where I was born and raised until I graduated from high school and followed in one of my older brother's footsteps and joined the navy. As a child I only attended church until I was about three when my little brother was born. When I imagine my mom became overwhelmed on Sundays, trying to get 6 kids from teenager to new born ready for church. So as a child I never really attended church with the family, but did go whenever I had a sleep over at a friend's house on a Saturday night. This was usually a Lutheran church with my friend Scott, and an occasional visit to Todd's Catholic Church, Good Shepherd. My moral formation was largely based in Boy Scouts, and not church. It wasn't until boot camp I darkened the door of a church on my own, but it was more of an escape from boot camp than a desire to go to Church. I continued to live the life of a sailor and in 1991 I met my wife Rowena, and her son Aaron. We married at the San Diego courthouse in 1995, it was a second marriage for both of us.

We were led to attend church by my son who in 1998, at around 12 years old came home one day and asked my wife, and I, if we could start attending church. Prior to this, we had at times gone to attend the Rock, and Skyline Church, seeking a church that felt like home, but nothing felt like home to my cradle Catholic wife, and she wasn't sure if as a divorcee of a Catholic Church marriage, she would really be welcomed back. But with the example of my regular Mass attending Catholic in-laws, and with my son's desire to get confirmed, we began attending Most Precious Blood in Chula Vista. Not to disparage the dead, but Father Frank's homilies were not energizing me, and I found church to be a struggle to remain upright and conscious.

After about a year, we transferred to Saint Jerome, a parish closer to our home at the time. Father Bruce was the pastor and was much younger and more energetic than Fr. Frank, and I began to enjoy going to church more. I had a desire to serve more, as my own parents in New York were two great examples of service to the community, my dad volunteered with Boy Scouts, the local volunteer ambulance, and meals on wheels, and my mom was a top-notch example of service to her local community: her family. Their example led me to want to serve within the church more, but I always felt restricted because I wasn't Catholic, I didn't know what I could and couldn't do. Could I bring up the offertory gifts, I am not Catholic? I knew I couldn't receive communion but wasn't sure what all I could do and more importantly, couldn't do.

RCIA was scheduled to begin soon, and my wife subtly reminded me, in a "Hey RCIA is starting up if you're interested." kind of way. I entered RCIA and completed my transformation from a virtually agnostic baptized Lutheran, to Catholic in 2002. Along with this my wife and I both had our previous marriages annulled, and our civil marriage blessed in the church.

Fast-forward a little, and my son began dating a protestant Christian, and was allowed to go to church with her, as long as he went to Mass with us on Sunday. He would occasionally confront my wife with questions about why Catholics do this or that. She didn't know the answers to these challenges to her childhood faith but knew in her heart the Catholic Church held the truth. In an effort to get answers to these questions, she began taking classes at the diocese, with Future deacons. This is now 2004, and Rowena asks me "Have you ever thought about being a deacon?" At just two years after becoming

Catholic, but knowing that Saint Jerome would need some help once it was built, I responded that it wasn't off the table, but it was a little too early in the journey.

A few more years go by, and in 2007, Rowena is still taking classes, working toward her master catechist certification, Aaron, is no longer going to Catholic Church, and I am keeping busy helping around the church with spaghetti dinners and what not. And I noticed we hadn't really spent time together in over two weeks. The church that was supposed to bring us together as a family seemed to be pushing us apart, and I realized it needed to be addressed. So in a rare instance, I sat down with my wife and talked to her about how we need to find a way to spend time together in church, or I was willing to throw away my faith so save my marriage.

It was a week later, a week and three days to be precise, that Father Jim Bahash, our pastor at Saint Jerome, asked to meet with Ro, and I. We sat down on bleachers at San Ysidro High School after Mass, and he began to ask me the same question Ro asked me a few years earlier... "Have you ever thought about becoming a deacon?" I quickly realized that when you pray to God to find a way to spend time together in Church, he might present you with a way to spend the next five years together with your wife in class while going through formation to become a deacon.

We met with the director of diaconal formation, Sister Carlotta DiLorenzo. We presented her all the possible roadblocks: "I am only 37." "The church says 'deacons must be of a mature age', and that is 35, your fine." ... "You know we have both been married and divorced." "You got your marriages annulled and you got remarried in the Church?" "Yep" "You're fine." ... "You should know I have only been Catholic for five years." "The honeymoon's over, you know what you're in for, you're fine." "You know my son is not Catholic." "He is an adult — his life, you're fine." All of the things I thought might be objections were tossed aside by Sister Carlotta, we were fine to begin the five years of formation.

Our first few meetings, we went from 11 candidates, to 10, then 9 and then by the fourth meeting we had the same eight candidates and their wives that would eventually be ordained together. Our first informal meeting was a gathering after the deacon ordination at one of my classmate's homes. We discussed what drew us to the diaconate. Among them, one of my candidates was once a seminarian until his now wife drew him out, another was stabbed in the chest at work as a customs agent and while healing, he had a lot of time to meditate on what he was going to be when he grew up. Another classmate had just lost their son and a deacon helped them through that process, and he wanted to be able to be there for others in similar situations. But among my classmates, two of them spoke about how impactful their Cursillo weekend was in their journey to the diaconate.

Having only the little catechesis I received during RCIA, I was a blank slate, so I proceeded to take a basic catechist course, and with the testimony of my classmates in mind, when Virgie Litonjua invited me to the Cursillo, I accepted.

The Cursillo was part of the foundation laid as I entered the diaconate, a foundation of stone, not sand. The love I felt from the community that weekend was powerful, and the number of people involved amazed me.

It was just as my fourth and final year of formation was about to begin, we closed Saint Jerome due to many issues, among them environmental, endangered habitat, and species. My first question to Father Jim was, "What does that mean for my diaconate ordination next year?" "You are coming with me to Saint Charles, you're fine."

This presented some new concerns, among them getting to know a new community in a year's time, and where will I fit among what will not be just two deacons, like at Saint Jerome, but among the six deacons we will have at Saint Charles when I am ordained. But I trusted in God to get me that far, I could trust him to get me through it.

God made his presence known to me during my journey through diaconate formation. He showed me that he was there all along on the journey through all those years as a child even when I didn't recognize he was there... he was there — in the neighbors, teachers, and in the boy scout leaders guiding me. He

gave me peace that there is no deacon mold that I had to fit into, that God calls each of us using our individual backgrounds, and talents for His glory.

He gave me peace, despite my shortcomings, and knowing little of the faith I was about to be ordained into. As I learned he built piece upon piece so that I could see how all of our faith is linked together into a strong fortress, not just a bunch of individual bricks, but an entire castle interlinked and built on each other.

He introduced me to the parts of the ministry I was uncomfortable in baby steps, often giving me a warm up before presenting me with a challenge, and there have been challenges.

We have buried too many of the people whose faces were familiar in the gatherings of the Cursillo, George Litonjua, and Frank Lopez among them both men I admired and looked up to in the early days of my Catholic faith, my classmate, friend, and fellow DeCuria member Vic Sanchez, and Deacon Sam Martinez, our previous assistant spiritual director. But at the same time, I have seen many young adults live their Cursillo weekend, and go on to marry fellow Cursillistas and start families of their own. Planting hope that the Filipino Cursillo Movement will continue onward.

God answered a prayer I prayed in a way I never expected, and in exchange gave me purpose to my life, and strengthened the marriage I thought he had threatened. He took a faith I was willing to throw away, and made it an integral part of my life, and my person, strengthening my marriage at the same time. And when things get hard, when the challenges come, I know I have God on my side, and I am fine.

De Colores

National Cursillo Spiritual Advisors

Welcome, Most Reverend Felipe Pulido

New National Cursillo Episcopal Advisor



Auxiliary Bishop Pulido was born and raised in a small town located west of Mexico City, and attended minor seminary in Uruapan, Michoacán. There, he attended middle school and began high school, but in 1988, he and his family left Mexico and moved to the Yakima Valley, where he finished high school. As a teenager, he worked in the fields, picking fruit and vegetables. Later, he worked as a teaching assistant at the Epic Migrant Head Start program in Yakima. For a period of about five months, he helped care for Father Jerry Corrigan, a priest in his parish who was dying of cancer. He and Father Corrigan had many conversations and, during one of them, the priest invited him to consider entering the priesthood. In 1994, he began his priestly formation at Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon. Four years later, he began theological studies at the Pontifical North American College and later at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, both in Rome.

He was ordained to the priesthood on June 28, 2002. At the time of his appointment as auxiliary bishop of San Diego, he was serving as vicar for clergy and as vocations director for the Diocese of Yakima, as well as pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Kennewick, WA.

Source: National Cursillo website

Welcome, Rev. Dr. Edgardo (Lalo) Jara, O.F.M.

National Spiritual Advisor for the US National Cursillo Movement



Rev. Dr. Edgardo Jara, O.F.M., affectionately known as Fr. Lalo, lived his Cursillo in 2015. He served as the Cursillo Spiritual Advisor for the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, from 2015 to 2020 and from 2022 to 2024. Fr. Lalo has felt a commitment to the church from a young age. He was called to discern a religious vocation in 1997, entering the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) in Mexico. Through much discernment, change and misdirection, the Lord led Fr. Lalo back to the Franciscans in 2012. He then earned his Master of Divinity and was ordained a Priest in 2017. Ministering primarily on the East Coast, his dedication to grassroots ecclesial communities culminated in a Doctor of Ministry. His missionary zeal extends into the digital world. Fr. Lalo hosts a podcast called Fe + Coffee, offering reflections on the mystery and centrality of the Eucharist. Fr. Lalo was born in San Carlos, Costa Rica, and raised in a deeply faith-filled family.

He is currently the Pastor at the multi-lingual parish of Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, CA. In addition to his love for teaching and preaching, Fr. Lalo enjoys hiking, exploring new cultures and traditions, traveling, singing, watching movies, relaxing in a hammock, and—staying true to the spirit of his podcast—drinking plenty of coffee.

Source: National Cursillo website
