

# THE 4TH DAY

Filipino Cursillo Movement of San Diego, CA

## BONUS ARTICLE!!!

**By Sis. Siena Dinh**

On July 24 and 25, 2020, Cursillo made history by having their first Virtual National Cursillo Encounter. Across four time zones, between 500-600 participants regularly signed on the Zoom Video Platform all day Friday and Saturday to listen to speakers and “gather” in a safe way. Unfortunately, an in-person National Cursillo Encounter was not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions on large gatherings as well as some states requiring quarantine for out-of-state visitors.



The first gathering was a bit overwhelming because of the massive amount of screens logged on. Many people were trying to familiarize themselves with Zoom and learn new ways to ask questions and share comments. Although meetings occasionally became hectic, I found myself excited and ultimately at peace because of

the bond we all shared: we each lived a Cursillo weekend. The virtue of patience constantly stood out to me because participants and co-hosts handled technical difficulties and confusing situations with charity. It was also very nice to know several deacons, priests, and bishops tuned in throughout the conference.

The virtual gathering consisted of several events and breakout sessions. As many understand, the COVID-19 pandemic may have modified the way things are done, but life truly goes on. I appreciated the opportunity to participate virtually in an event I probably wouldn't be able to attend in-person because of my family responsibilities. I was also grateful for the choice to log on and off when needed.

On Friday evening, Sis Bobbi Lavoie was the lay witness for the Ultreya. Over 550 screens signed on to listen to her testimony on the power of miracles. Sis Bobbi lived her Cursillo in 2002 and, although she and her family were “cradle Catholics” and blessed to receive many health-related miracles...Sis Bobbi still felt she was missing something. In 2014, Sis Bobbi had major surgery for her breast cancer and needed a special reclining chair and several weeks to recover. In 2017, Sis Bobbi saw someone in need of that same chair and began a program called “A Chair For Comfort.” With a new program of loaning expensive medical chairs underway, Sis Bobbi found two graces in this ministry—her brother, who is bipolar, assisted her with chair installations and she treasured the quality time with him as well as the increased opportunities for friendship he experienced and the confidence he gained. Lastly, Sis Bobbi realized a deep level of love for God and love of self through friendship and living her Cursillo.





On Saturday morning, many hosts gave presentations on the Blessed Virgin Mary. Some Marian depictions were provided in a different language. Throughout the Virtual National Cursillo Encounter, I noticed such care and effort to reach many Cursillistas on one platform during one event. In person, these events would often be in separate language tracks. However, the organizers made the most of Zoom—if something was presented in English, Spanish and Vietnamese translations would be provided on “share screen” for others to read. If something was presented in another language, the other two were

provided. Sis Penny de Leon from the Diocese of Oakland provided background on Our Lady of Manaoag (Philippines) and shared how Our Lady of Manaoag is the patroness of the sick, needy, and helpless.

The Keynote Speaker of Saturday was Fr. Mark Seiker, the Spiritual Advisor for the National Cursillo. Fr. Mark lived his Cursillo in March of 1987 and is currently Pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Nebraska. Fr. Mark shares the meaning of a personal encounter with Christ along with his own personal encounter with Christ. To exercise the soul is to free ourselves of the desires of infatuation with this world. We are like vessels that must be emptied of its contents and then cleansed—even if you have to work hard and scour it. It must be made fit for the new. Thomas á Kempis states that one who lives without Jesus is the poorest of the poor and there is no one richer than the man who lives in God’s grace. Fr. Mark emphasizes it was many small encounters that what molded who he is today—not just one significant moment. It was important for Fr. Mark to realize he is a human BEING and not simply a “human doer” always doing something and keeping busy. Although Fr. Mark lived in a very



prayerful and faith-filled family, he recalls a specific moment of confession: A priest named Fr. John said to him, “I see a man who is sorry for his sins and wants to be better...and that is how I will see you.” This simple statement from a priest in persona Christi (in the person of Christ) during the Sacrament of Reconciliation was very impactful and it led to a regular devotion to

receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation monthly. Another encounter with Christ was when Fr. Mark was invited to a 3-day Cursillo weekend—what influenced him to go was someone pointing out that a lot of people involved in the parish are cusillistas. Fr. Mark found the 3-day weekend exciting because he saw lay men speak about their love of Christ and share how they’re living faith in a practical way. After living his weekend, Fr. Mark was in regular group reunions until he transferred parishes and served in an area without Cursillo. Initially, Fr. Mark put a lot of focus on 3-day Cursillo weekends and getting them started in different areas, but Regional Cursillo Encounters helped him realize the importance of Pre-Cursillo, Group Reunion, Ultreya, and forming a School of Leaders. Familiar with the phrase, “An isolated Christian is a paralyzed Christian,” Fr. Mark heard it applied to Cursillo: An isolated group reunion is a paralyzed group reunion.

Being the last event of the Virtual National Cursillo Encounter that I could attend, I really reflected on the final words of Fr. Mark Seiker. It is absolutely essential to attend group reunion AND Ultreya. After all, we were told that multiple times toward the end of our stay in the Cursillo House! With the current pandemic putting restrictions on social events, it is a bit disheartening to be reminded of the importance of gathering as a

community. However, the Virtual National Cursillo Encounter truly leads by example in showing what matters most is trying and making the most of what we have and are capable of doing. I hope to follow the example of Sis Bobbi and Fr. Mark by allowing God's grace to work in my life and increase my efforts to live DE COLORES in our unique times.

DE COLORES!!

