

President's Letter

It is with a sense of excitement that I write my first letter as president of the National Episcopal Cursillo Committee. We just finished a great seminar in Colorado Springs. Those in the Colorado Cursillo community, led by Dee Settelmeyer, were wonderful hosts. We had challenging sermons from Rt. Rev. Robert O'Neill, the Bishop of Colorado, Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe, the Bishop of Iowa and the NECC's Liaison to the House of Bishops, and Rev. Don Seils of Parker, Colorado, a leader in the host community, very good workshops on a variety of subjects and an outstanding talk by our keynoter, Susan Ferran, author and Cursillista from the Diocese of California. As we left we were reminded of the words of the theme song:

So walk down this mountain with your head held high

Follow in the footsteps of your Maker

And with this love that's gone before you and these people at your side

If you offer up your broken cup, you will taste the meaning of this life.

Yes, most of us have left the mountain. Now, through our service and God's love we can taste the meaning of this life.

I have enjoyed my term as a representative from the west on the NECC and have really enjoyed the friendships I have developed with my contacts in the dioceses with which I have had the opportunity to work. I happen to think that the most important role that a representative has is to develop close relationships with the dioceses for which he or she is responsible and to find ways to help each diocese do a better job of improving its Cursillo movement.

Thank you to those whose terms on the NECC just ended – Rev, Bob Dendtler, Jim Swaney, Martha Libby and Ronnie Barhite. They and the continuing members – Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe, Rev. Wayne Sanders, Rev. Don Nesheim, Judy Hood, Colleen Lambert, John Clow, Doug Van Demark, Thom Neal, Gary Rose and Sue Davis – have been instrumental during the past two years in trying to discern God's will for a Cursillo Movement that has been struggling in many parts of the country. We were ably led in this process by Gary, Bob and John. All representatives from 2006 and 2007 have participated. Recently Bob very effectively summarized this work as follows:

NATIONAL EPISCOPAL CURSILLO COMMITTEE CORE VALUES AND PURPOSE

The National Episcopal Cursillo Committee undertook a self evaluation beginning in January 2006. The self examination was triggered by the responses to The Annual Diocesan Questionnaire distributed in 2005 which was designed to measure the health of the Movement. The results indicated that there were problems in many local movements: low participation in Fourth Day Activities, weak clergy support, and a decreasing number of weekends to name some.

The first step in the process was to identify the core values of the Cursillo Movement. After much discussion the core values were narrowed to three. They are: **God is in charge; Christ is our leader; the Holy Spirit is our empowerment.** We also recognized that the Movement functions under certain mandates such as under the authority of the Presiding Bishop and a legal agreement with the National Secretariat of the Cursillo Movement (Roman Catholic).

The second step in this process was to consider the business of the Movement that is “What do we do to accomplish our purpose?” The result of our work is that the Movement is to teach the Cursillo Method, target leaders, put on Weekends, foster Fourth Day Activities, and live out the Fourth Day.

The third step was to consider the purpose of the National Episcopal Cursillo Committee (NECC) itself. It was determined that the primary purpose of the NECC is to help dioceses carry out the business/work of the Movement, that is, those elements we identified in step two. It is also recognized that the NECC is to play an essential role in raising up and empowering Christ centered leaders to evangelize our communities.

As a result of this examination, the NECC has decided to reorganize to better meet the needs of the Movement. The NECC will have four subcommittees: the Executive Committee (required by the by-laws); Publications; Cursillo Leaders Development; Communications. To further assist in the work of the Movement four servant communities will be continued or established. They are: ECLW (ongoing); Seminar (being formed); a consulting group to work with diocesan movements that are struggling; Finance/Fund Raising.

The entire process has taken over a year and a half. The NECC firmly believes that this work will benefit diocesan movements and the overall Cursillo Movement.

Yet, while during the past two years we have found areas where local movements are struggling we have also found and been able to assist dioceses in reviving and regenerating their movements. The Diocese of Arizona is a prime example. Though many were active in groups and there had been a few Ultreya gatherings, there was no organization and had been no weekends for several years. With Rt. Rev. Kirk Smith's support, then Canon to the Ordinary Chuck Robertson's hands-on help (he is now in the national office as Canon to the Presiding Bishop), and the work of many enthusiastic Cursillistas living in the area, the Movement is again fully alive. An organizational body is in place, Ultreyas have been held throughout the diocese, a Cursillo Day of Refreshment and Rededication was held in September and weekends are scheduled for next April. Our goal is to really increase our work in this area and to begin at least one new renewal in each district in 2008. Our goal is to help diocesan movements make a difference for Christ. Our goal is to help local diocesan movements to carry out their role of raising up and empowering Christ-centered leaders to evangelize our communities. Our goal is to tailor what we do – publications, seminars, web site, communications, ECLW's, consultations – to meet these specific needs. And, finally, our goal is to continue changing the ways that we do business to better meet these goals.

I am looking forward to this year of work together with the continuing and seven new members of the NECC as we strive to meet these goals. To paraphrase Paul in Philippians 3:14, I look forward to a year in which we all build upon the things that are behind and reach out for the things that are ahead, striving toward the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ. We are stewards of the gift that the Cursillo Movement is and has been to the Episcopal Church and to the world. As stewards we have work to do but we are not alone. **God is in charge; Christ is our leader; the Holy Spirit is our empowerment.**

Peace,

Ted Ederer