

When I made my Cursillo Weekend, I had a close personal relationship with God. I was, however, very lonely within our Catholic Church. I used to attend Bible Studies at non-denominational churches, for this was not available in the Parish setting in those days. There was several years in which I prayed for permission to leave our Catholic Church and go to a non-denominational church that seemed family oriented and community minded. Out of obedience, I remained Catholic and eventually God's promise, that I would "find a love for my Church beyond my present understanding" came true. Then in time, my prayer changed from one of "can I have permission to leave the Church" to "can you use me to help others to not feel as lonely and lost within our Catholic Church?" Then the Holy Spirit invited me to become part of Cursillo.

In 1994, I was very, very shy. I was also way out of my comfort zone spending four days with other women I had never met before. I have shared with many of you that I forgot to bring socks on my weekend. I was too shy, despite the fact that the team kept asking if anyone needed anything, to ask for a fresh pair of socks.

Four years ago, I took to prayer the invitation to become the Lay Director for Philadelphia Cursillo. Again, I felt way out of my comfort zone. I sensed that God was asking this of me, so I wanted so much to say "Yes". I was quite scared. I found myself praying one of Pope John Paul II's favorite prayers, "Be Not Afraid".

I have learned a lot about myself and about leadership skills from working Cursillo Weekends and working with a group of lovely women in a ministry for mothers for several years. This is what community does. We help each other to learn to identify our gifts, we support one another as we learn how to use them and then we celebrate with one another as we see the fruits of our "yes" to moving out of our comfort zone and following the prompting of the Holy Spirit in service. We learn to "speak the truth in love" as it says in Ephesians 4:15.

"Living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love".

This past December, after I gave a talk at the Advent Mass, a woman who had been the Assistant Lay Director when I made my Cursillo Weekend approached me. She told me that she "could not believe how far I had come". Then she said these words, which have stuck in my mind since she said them. "I remember". She remembered how shy I was and that I had lot of trouble speaking in front of the group. I had forgotten in some ways just how difficult it was for me back then. It may always be a difficult for me to speak in front of others, but I am learning how. Kellyanne told me that this is a gift from Cursillo to me. This is one of many gifts that I am grateful to Cursillo for.

Last night I had a dream about someone sharing how much Cursillo has changed his or

her life. When I woke up this morning, I could not remember if the person I dreamt about was a man or woman or even exactly what story they told me. As I took this dream to prayer, God showed me that the person in my dream represented the many people who have shared their story with me over the past four years. For many people, Cursillo has been a life changing experience when they made their weekend. It is also life changing, as they remain involved in the little or big ways as the Holy Spirit invites them to be. I woke up with a confirmation that this Movement is an amazing gift to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and to the world.

I would like to invite each Cursillista to say one Our Father each day to intercede for Philadelphia Cursillo. As you say the words, "give us each day our daily bread" let this be a reminder that each day we are to ask God for direction within the Movement for that day.

My prayer for each Cursillista is that you have the grace to say, "Yes" when God is inviting you to come out of your comfort zone and serve, in both little and big ways. I pray to that you are surrounded by a group of amazing friends, as I have been, who will help you to identify your gifts and who will love and support you as you learn how to use them; that they care enough about your growth to "speak the truth in love". I pray for the grace to forgive when error does occur, for that is the human condition. When we have a group of human beings working to serve, even if it is the Lord's work, we will make mistakes. I pray that we are able to live knowing that the strength in Cursillo comes with the comfort of knowing that we do our best, we offer the results up to God and He uses all as He wills.

De Colores, everyone!
Much love and prayers,
Peg Choinski