

GROWING IN HOLINESS THROUGH THE CURSILLO

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National Cursillo Encounter
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What Does God Want for Us?

- Wealth?
- Personal Influence?
- Fame?
- Health?
- Power?

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What is God's Ultimate Wish for Us?

**That all His children be
with Him forever in
Heaven!**

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This means we must each grow in holiness...

- **"You shall be holy, for I am holy."** (Leviticus 11:45)
- **"You shall remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God."** (Numbers 15:40)
- **"Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."** (Matthew 5:48)
- **"But as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in your conduct."** (1 Peter 1:15)

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Catechism of the Catholic Church

- "From the Church (the Christian) learns the example of holiness and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary;
- he discerns it in the authentic witness of those who live it;
- he discovers it in the spiritual tradition and long history of the saints who have gone before him and whom the liturgy celebrates..."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church: #2030)

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God wants us to...

- ***Grow in our personal holiness.***
- ***Help others grow in their own holiness.***

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The Cursillo Vision

- Transformation of the world to become holy by teaching and providing individuals what is fundamental to being Christian.
 - Loving God.
 - Loving one another.

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The Means to Do It

- **Pre-Cursillo**: the selection of candidates & team preparation.
- **Cursillo Weekend**: the initial formation.
- **Post-Cursillo**: the deepening process.
 - Friendship Group Reunions
 - Ultreyas
 - School of Leaders

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How Are We Doing?

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of Cursillo Weekends per year.
- Number of candidates attending Weekends.
- Number of weekly Friendship Group Reunions.
- Number of weekly Ultreyas and attendance.
- Frequency of School of Leaders and attendance.
- **Percentage of all Cursillistas meeting in Friendship Group Reunions.**

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What's the Big Picture?

- 1.2 billion Catholics world-wide.
- Catholics are the largest U.S. denomination.
 - 77 million Catholics
 - Only 23% attend Sunday Mass (17 million)
 - 77% attend rarely (60 million)
- On average, **7% of parishioners are active** volunteers and they provide more than 80% of parish financial support.
 - 5.4 million.

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What the Active 7% Accomplish:

- Catholic schools:
 - 2.6 million students (\$10 billion in tuition).
 - 230 colleges & universities.
- Catholic hospitals (637).
- Catholic charities for housing, food, clothing, social services.
- Positive Catholic influence in business, politics, culture & society.

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Imagine the Possibilities...

What if 14% of Catholics were actively engaged (another 5.4 million members)?

- More would be involved in ministries.
- More financial support for programs.
- Inactive Catholics would return to God and His Church.
 - (more trouble finding church parking!)

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So, What's the Solution?

Growth in Personal Holiness = Becoming the Best Version of Yourself.

- The whole world/whole man story.
- The Cursillo Tripod: **PSA**
 - *Piety*
 - *Study*
 - *Action*

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Free Books for You!

1. Rediscovering Catholicism
2. The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic

- Both by Matthew Kelly
- www.DynamicCatholic.com

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An PSA-equivalent Approach

- 4 Signs of a Dynamic Catholic:

1. Prayer
2. Study
3. Generosity
4. Evangelization

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Dynamic Catholic Sign #1: Prayer

- Spiritual health = a peaceful, confident, compassionate life.
- Begin each day in conversation with God.
- Have a routine time, place, and method of prayer.
- More silence = more clarity.

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Many Possible Daily Prayer Routines...

- Daily Mass: Readings & Meditations
 - www.usccb.org website
 - Laudate iPhone app
- Liturgy of the Hours
 - Divine Office iPhone app
- Rosary
- Examination of Conscience
 - Mea Culpa iPhone app

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An Easy Way to Teach Prayer

- KISS Principle: *Keep It Simple, Saint!*
- **7 – Step Prayer Process**
 - Simple to remember.
 - Easily repeatable.
 - Deepens your relationship with God.
 - Helps you become the best-version-of-yourself (holy).

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7-Step Prayer Process

(See page 61 in "The 4 Signs of a Dynamic Catholic")

1. Gratitude
2. Awareness
3. Significant Moments
4. Peace
5. Freedom
6. Others
7. Our Father

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Dynamic Catholic Sign #2: Study

- Many Catholics feel an inferiority complex explaining their faith to others.
- Lack of knowledge = disengagement with faith.
- World's goal for you: *Consumption!*
 - Mom's story...
- Relativism weakens the search for, trust in, and proclamation of God's truth.
 - Results in a lack of wisdom in living life = no joy or peace.
 - Too much drama; selfishness; high-maintenance living.

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The Cure: Study!

- Be a continuous learner.
 - "Those who do not read are no better than those who cannot read."
- Strive for daily small amounts of incremental growth in knowledge.
- Read at least 5 pages of a good Catholic book every day.
- Timed exercise:
 - Read the inside back cover of your National Cursillo Program.
 - Raise your hand when finished.

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That Was Easy!

- 5 pages per day (5 minutes)
 - = 1,825 pages/year = 9 books (30 hours)
 - = 18,250 pages/decade = 90 books
 - = 45,625 pages/quarter century = 228 books
- How many hours of TV do you watch:
 - Per day, per week, per month?
 - How much of that time brings you closer to God?
 - Dad's story...

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What Should You Read?

Email or text me your email address, and I'll send you:

- Daily Mass Readings & Meditations.
- Deacon Ben's Book Recommendations.
- Discover Your Spiritual Motivational Gifts Questionnaire.
- Links to Cursillo photos.

Email: benagustin@juno.com

Cell: (510) 388-1551

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Dynamic Catholic Sign #3: Generosity

- The happiest people are the most generous people.
- Dynamic Catholics are filled with gratitude and a sense of being blessed.
- Good Stewards of time, talent, and financial Treasure.

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Generosity Challenge: *Tithe!*

- Follow the Bible's prescription of showing your material gratitude to and trust in God.
- Set a goal to tithe 10% of monthly income and/or annual wealth accumulation to charities that serve the needs of the less fortunate and the Church.
- Calculate what percentage you gave away last year. Increase by 1% each year until no longer prudent.
 - My story...
 - Diocesan Cursillo Movement story...

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Dynamic Catholic Sign #4: Evangelization

- God calls you to change yourself and the world for the better.
- **Everything you choose to do matters!**
 - No decision is trivial in God's eyes.
 - Either it helps you become the best version of yourself (holy), or it doesn't.

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The Best Way to Live

- Are some ways of living better than others?
- Our individualistic, hedonistic, minimalistic, relativistic culture says "No".
 - "If it feels good, do it!"
- Our God says "**Yes**".
 - "Be, give, and do the best you can in all you do."
 - "Die to yourself to live for God."

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3 Basic Principles

- God put you on this earth to become the best version of yourself (to become holy).
- Living virtuously is a common aspiration for everyone.
- Self-control (discipline) is key to achieving the best way to live.

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The Cursillo Answer to the Best Way

- Love God with your whole mind, soul, and strength.
- Love your neighbor as yourself.

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WIN, BUILD, SEND

We evangelize by:

1. **Winning** people over to God's way of thinking through our sincere friendship and concern.
2. **Building** them up to be stronger in understanding and living their faith through our mentoring and example.
3. **Sending** them forth with us to repeat the process with others.

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PRACTICAL WAYS TO EVANGELIZE

1. Set a goal of talking with 1 new person each week about your Catholic faith and learning about theirs.
2. Give them something to read and think about that pertains to their own spiritual journey.
3. Invite them to meet with you weekly to further the discussion.
4. Invite them to your Cursillo Friendship Group and Ultreya meetings.

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YOUR HOMEWORK

- Read “Rediscover Catholicism”
- Read “The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic”
- Think of ways that you can implement these ideas in your Cursillo evangelization method of “making friends, being friends, and bringing your friends to Christ”.

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Remember

- You are not alone in your efforts to change the world for Christ.
- God blesses you for your efforts and sacrifice.
- “Jesus sees you!”

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Thank you, and God bless you!

De Colores!

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Photos:

www.flickr.com/photos/benagustin/collections

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