

Good Morning,

As father said, my name is _____ and I've been a parishioner here at _____ for _____ years. You'll be glad to know that I will be brief and I will not be asking you for money. I am here to talk about Cursillo. It began among Catholics in Spain in the early 1940's, just after the civil war, when a group of young men made a pilgrimage to the shrine of St James at Compostela, Spain. This pilgrimage is often referred to as "El Camino de Santiago". In 2010, a movie was made about this pilgrimage called "THE WAY" with Martin Sheen and Emilio Esteves.

Cursillo translated from Spanish means "Short course", but it is so much more. It came to the United States in the 1960's and has been growing ever since. Millions around the world have lived a Cursillo weekend.

There have been thousands in our diocese, including many of our diocesan priests and bishops, who have lived a Cursillo weekend.

So, what is this "Cursillo"? Briefly, during these weekends you'll listen to talks given by clergy, and regular people just like you, trying to juggle life in these crazy, busy times. You'll meet folks from ages 18-88. At the essence of Cursillo is the recognition that "while most people would like to live their lives in a Christ-like manner, the pressures of the world often make this difficult. Cursillo offers a method and a technique to provide each of us the tools, the mentality, the strength, and the support to walk in Christ." It is a weekend where you can find answers to your questions about our Catholic faith. It is an inspiring, down to earth, way to figure out your priorities, and find who is this man we call "Christ" and what He really wants for you.

The Cursillo weekend is a weekend that you live only once in your life. There are men's weekends and women's weekends. Currently our Diocese holds them at the Immaculate Conception Retreat Center in Putnam, CT. just over the border, down RT 395, usually 4 times a year.

Bishop McCormack of the Diocese of Manchester NH wrote in a public letter stating, "I have always been impressed with the people in the

parishes who were members of the Cursillo movement. They were often leaders in their parishes and they always struck me as people who genuinely wanted to help, not out of a self-centered need to be recognized, but out of a real desire to serve others.”

St Pope John Paul II said of Cursillo, “The little seed sown in Spain more than 50 years ago has become a great tree rich in fruits of the Spirit”,

Addressing the Cursillo community, Pope Francis said “I encourage you to go beyond, faithful to your charism! To keep alive the zeal, the fire of the Spirit that always compels the followers of Christ to reach those on the peripheries, to "step out of their comfort zone and have the courage to reach all the suburbs that need the light of the Gospel".

My job today is to generate curiosity in attending a Cursillo weekend, and hopefully I’ve done that. Allow yourself a nice break. Come away. You’ll enjoy home cooked meals, and have a blast with a bunch of Catholics. Your faith deserves it. I highly recommend a Cursillo weekend no matter where you are in your spiritual journey. What it did for me was put God a little higher up on my priority scale for life. But you know, the weekend is different for everyone. Cursillo will be for you, what it needs to be for you.

The next men’s Cursillo weekend is [Feb 22-25 for men]. They start on Thurs. evening after work and run until about 5 on Sunday. If you have any questions I’ll be at the door after Mass and I have brochures that help explain a little further and it has contact information for further questions.

Father, thank you again for having me. Enjoy the rest of your day.