

# In the Quiet of Our Hearts, We'll Find the Answer

By Deacon David Brencic



*“Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”*

-- Romans 12: 2

We’ve probably all done a New Year’s resolution at one time or another. We promise ourselves we’re going to lose 10 pounds or exercise more or be a kinder, gentler and slower driver.

Those are the things that we see need changing in our lives, but how does God see us? How many times have we heard that line from the prophet Isaiah: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.”

So does God factor into our life equation of what we’re going to do differently in 2014? The Little Blue Book, a collection of reflections on Advent and Christmas, suggests we ask God -- “Lord, what do I need to work on in this new year?”

*In the quiet of our hearts, we’ll find the answer.*

Perhaps we need to recommit ourselves to study. We’ve put off reading that spiritual book on our nightstand long enough. Make the extra effort to read at least a few pages or even chapter a day and you’ll be richer for the wisdom and insight you gain.



*“Recommit ourselves to the Spirit of Cursillo.”*

What can you do to become more pious? Eucharistic adoration, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, perhaps going to reconciliation once a month are just a few

possibilities that will enrich your spiritual life. **Action.** Instead of hibernating this winter, it’s time to get off the couch. Is there someone who needs a ride to Mass or what about taking a Sunday afternoon and visiting elderly patients in a nursing home? Or why not ask a fellow Cursillista to work a team with you? We are disciples who are called to put faith into action, not sit on the sidelines of life.

January 1 is dedicated as a feast day to Mary, the Holy Mother of God. Mary is a model of faith. She serves as a constant reminder to us of the importance of saying yes to God and allowing God’s will to be done in our lives. God can work through us if we just open our hearts to him. Like Mary, we too can be instruments that God uses to change the lives of others. A new year gives us an opportunity to rekindle that spark within us. The possibilities are indeed endless. It’s letting the Lord take the lead in how we’re going to renew and refresh our faith, and recommit ourselves to the spirit of Cursillo.

*“Just ask Him.”*

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## Wanted .... A Few Good Men.

We are still looking for a few men to complete our team. Contact Ed Morley at [d.morley@comcast.net](mailto:d.morley@comcast.net). Meetings are all on Saturdays, starting on February 1, 2014.



## Ring Out the Old, Ring in the New

By Dan Kane

“Ring out the Old, Ring in the New.” It is said that these words by Alfred Lord Tennyson came to the mind of Great Britain’s Poet Laureate as the bells of Abbey Church were being rung haphazardly by a strong wind.

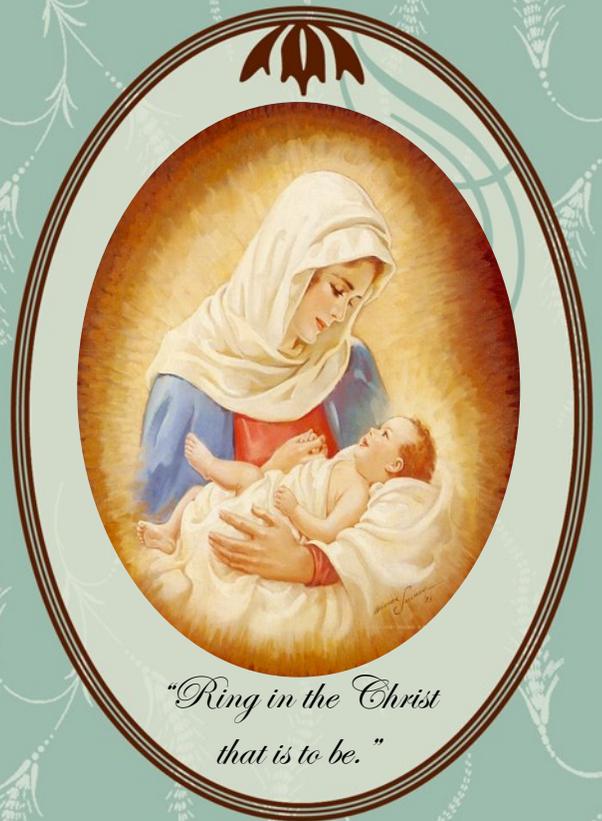
The strong winds of change have also been blowing for the Chicago Cursillo Secretariat during 2013. After many years of selfless dedication to our cause, **Ron and Marie Caronti** decided last summer to pass the baton to Cindy and me. Although they plan on spending precious time visiting their grandkids, they also plan on strongly remaining involved with Cursillo. This past month, they represented Cursillo at the Mass for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cardinal George’s priesthood, and Ron will be the Assistant Rector for the upcoming Cursillo #253 men’s team. Cindy and I are also very grateful for their continued mentoring during this transition period.

Another change to the Secretariat involves **Gary and Mary Figiel** stepping aside and helping to train **Steve and Rosa Haraf** in the role of Post Cursillo Chairs. Based on the wonderful attendance of our 4th-Day members during the Women’s Cursillo #252 weekend, at both the Candlelight and Closura ceremonies, the tag-team of Figiel-Haraf has been a winning combination.

Other recent changes to the Secretariat include: **Joe and Sue Wisheart** shifting over from Support Chair to 3-Day Chair, as they bring their strong organizational skills to this very important position; **Joanne Collins** replaces Joe and Sue as Support Chair; **Deb Yurchesan** has become our Secretary; and our Spiritual Director is now **Fr. Mike Michelini**, who replaces **Fr. Mike Hack** who recently retired. We are also very grateful for stability in our group as **Mike and Chris La Tona** have agreed to remain our Rock of Gibraltar as Pre-Cursillo Chair.

Lastly, we are very excited about our newest position at the Secretariat; Communication Chair. We are blessed to have **Bob and Ellen Chio** take-on this position. The re-designed **Chicagocursillo.org** web-site and this updated newsletter format are just a few samples of their talent.

The Secretariat meets typically on the fourth Saturday morning of each month at St. Gertrude parish convent. Our meetings are open to all 4<sup>th</sup>-Day members. Besides the four scheduled Cursillo weekends, plans are being drawn up for several 4<sup>th</sup>-Day events during 2014.



Albert Lord Tennyson

We would love to have you join us at our meetings, or if you are looking for an action plan for 2014, come and be a part of the several planning committees that are being formed.

The goal is simply to maintain the vibrancy of our Christ-centered Chicago Cursillo movement. To this goal, Albert Lord Tennyson stated it well when he wrote the final line of his famous poem “Ring Out, Wild Bells”: “...ring in the Christ that is to be.”

Happy New Year and De Colores,

*Dan Kane*

Our next Secretariat Meeting will be January 25, 2014. **All are Welcome.**



The 4th Saturday of Each Month is the targeted date for Secretariat Meetings. Check the Website Calendar for any changes.

## Chicago Catholic Cursillo Mission Statement

### Editors' Note

"How Good is the Good God", one of St. Julie Billiart's more famous quotes. We think this newsletter reflects the Goodness of God through the generosity of our community contributors.

When we took over the task of communications, we were also given the task of developing the newsletter. Our goal was to help fulfill the mission statement of the Cursillo Movement.

We hope that you enjoy this issue and that it will inspire you to not only examine how you live a Life in Grace but how others around you are Living It. How do you encourage others to Shine their Light of the Living Christ; by attending a Candlelight Mass or coming to pray in the chapel during a weekend as Palanca for a speaker?

Maybe there is someone you have not seen in awhile. Someone who has not attended Reunion or an Ultreya lately. Maybe this person can be your Action—Evangelization is not limited to those outside our community. We need to help encourage and inspire our fellow Cursillistas to continue or resume Living a Life of Grace. We all have our ups and downs in life; that is why a community is so important. We need to lean on as well as learn from each other; and most importantly pray with each other at Reunions, Ultreyas and other community functions. We are a Living Sign of God's Grace. We cannot light our lamp and hide it under a bushel. We need to go out and let it Shine.

So consider contacting us and sharing your insights and the ways you are Living a Life in Grace by contributing to the newsletter.

De Colores

Robert and Ellen Chio

*"We are a Catholic community committed to growing closer to Christ through prayer, study and service. By living the Gospel message, we encourage others to join us in making a positive difference in the world."*

## Cursillo History or Mystery

### Question:

Is it a Study or Formation talk? Is there any difference?

### Answer:

Yes, but not a lot ...here is a brief history that helps explain why and how.

Piety, Study and Apostolic Action were the by words of the Cursillo Movement in the 1960's, and of the tripod that supported our "Live in Grace". In Reunion, they guide us to share our selves, giving and receiving support. A few decades later we were given new words, Holiness, Formation and Evangelization, which were to help us more fully translate the essence of the original tripod talk titles.

The description of the Study (Formation) talk in terms of time (1950's to today) and culture (Spanish to English) has changed from "to destroy the prejudices people have about the Cursillo and Christianity" to "a call to sanctity through putting on the mind of Christ as we search for truth". The Study talk challenges us to change, to move forward and to begin a process of progressive conversion.

Today the Movement asks us to return to the "roots" of the Cursillo; to return to the original titles. So, the essence of Study has not really changed much. It's still about our ongoing conversion, consciously seeking the mind of Christ as we journey toward home.

De Colores

Greg Bewley

## Important Dates

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|------------------|--|
| January 1, 2014  | Invite your friend to make the Next Mens' or Women's Cursillo. It is never to early send applications. We should have 12 men by February 1, 2014 with applications in the Latona's hands at this time. See website for applications and sponsor information. |
| January 19, 2014 | Chicago March For Life 1 PM to 3 PM. See Ad at the end of the newsletter for details.  |
| February 1, 2014 | First Mens' Team Meeting   |
| February 8, 2014 | Grande Ultreya at St. Hedwigs RSVP via our website — <a href="http://www.chicagocursillo.org">www.chicagocursillo.org</a><br>See Ad at the end of the newsletter for details   |

## Be Still and that I am God — Psalm 46:10



By Kate O'Connell

*I*n the winter months, nature appears dormant.

Not much seems to be happening. John O' Donohue, an Irish poet and Catholic scholar, talked of how in wintertime; although plants are not growing, insects are not buzzing, and animals have burrowed into the ground, much is happening behind the scenes to prepare for spring. In fact, spring would not be possible without winter because preparations for spring are happening in the earth all winter long. He linked this to our spiritual lives. Prayer can feel dry and dull and appear to be doing nothing for us. And yet, it's not the quality of our

prayer that matters; it's the fact that we simply do it. By choosing to pray, we are choosing God. This is what God asks of us; choose "ME" and "I will take care of everything else".

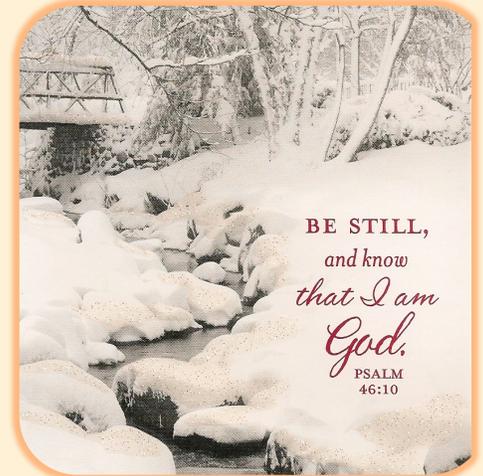
A favorite saying of mine I saw once hanging in an office; it goes something like this:

***"You won't find time to pray until you believe it's the most important thing you can do."***

The belief that prayer is the most important thing we can do grows, however infinitesimally, every time we pray. Honestly, especially in our culture, prayer looks like a terrific waste of time. When we are finished praying, our piles of paper and stuff are still there, phone calls and emails are still unanswered and the to-do list is still long. What's the point of prayer? The point is when we choose prayer, we chose God - we chose God over our stuff and to-do's. Every time we pray, the Spirit is working

beneath the surface to deepen our faith and to shape us more into vessels of God's love.

This winter while the birds have flown south, the trees are bare and the ground is blanketed in snow, let us pray, confident that every prayer is a seed that God will grow within us to bear fruit in springtime.



## Thoughtful Prayer

- ☞ Whenever you enjoy a warm drink such as coffee in the morning or tea in the afternoon, take note of your surroundings and give thanks. At the very least give thanks for your cup of warm something!
- ☞ In your workspace, place a token like a small saint statue, a medallion or coin imprinted with Mother Mary, Angels or other religious symbol to remind you to turn to God as you encounter challenges in your work or to pray for someone who needs God's help. Consider changing your tokens every few weeks lest you become blind to what is always there.
- ☞ Set a reminder on your phone for one of the prayer times in the Liturgy of the Hours. Choose your specific time but here is a general description of the Liturgy of the Hours: Vigils - pre-dawn, Lauds - sunrise, Terce (meaning third hour) - mid-morning, Sext (sixth hour) - noon, None (ninth hour) - mid-afternoon, Vespers - twilight or evening, Compline - night. Check out the free phone apps "Laudate" or iBreviary or old school books such as Seven Sacred Pauses by Marcellina Wiederkehr for this type of Liturgical prayer. You can keep it simple by reciting an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be at one of these times or the Chaplet of Mercy.
- ☞ Edward Hays in Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim, suggests creating an image of yourself praying before you go to sleep each night. "Allow your imagination to taste the sense of peace and fulfillment that comes from such communion with God. Such a mental blueprint can make it considerably easier to remain faithful" to your prayer time.

## Catholic Apps

- **Confession:** A Roman Catholic App: track daily your deeds, use of an examination of conscience as well as for confession. It's password protected to ensure your privacy for Android users while **Mea Culpa** is an app available for iPhone users.
- **Touch Rosary** or similar apps have prayers or chaplets to carry with you on your phone for free or little cost.
- **Laudate** or **iBreviary** are free applications for both Androids and iPhone users that feature the Liturgy of Hours.
- **The Pope App:** Its all about the Pope; his schedule, transcripts of speeches, videos and more. (Free for Androids & iPhones)
- **Truth & Life RSV-CE:** Free bible app but the audio companion can be purchased as well as other audio companions for this app. It also links you to Catholic news, a bible study and more.



## *New Years Resolutions*

By Mike Ferchau

Charles Dickens, in "A Tale of Two Cities" wrote "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times..." Dickens seems to work very well today, as I've been reflecting on this past Advent- the best of times- celebrating the birth of our Savior and trying to bring joy to my environment.. I'm also trying to figure out what New Year's resolutions I should make to become a better me for my family, colleagues and others I will meet in this journey through life. For me this preparation is the worst of times. It gets hard to come up with a resolution I will actually keep.

If we are following our Cursillo credo, we should be doing the very same thing. Not bi-annually, perhaps, but weekly. You know..."What are you planning for the upcoming week to further your Christianity?" I have observed that there seems to be no problem where two of the three legs of our tripod are concerned. Holiness seems to come easy to most, as there is ample time for attending mass, receiving Eucharist, prayer, examination of conscience, meditation (sometimes called 'resting in the Spirit' if you get really meditative) and almost everyone will notice a God moment when they see it. See, Dickens', the best of times.

And evangelization is a natural thing, especially at this time of year, because everyone is so jolly and still running full of the Christmas spirit. Again, surely, the best of times.

But that third leg in the tripod seems to take a hit. Where do we find time for formation/study? What forms of study have we used to understand our faith or fellow man better? This really seems to require some time and energy.

Some, however, seem to have a relatively easy time putting aside some time for study. I have a friend and he really gets into the

books. He spends hours upon hours hitting book after book and studying it, seeking parallels and correlations. He is really into it. But not all of us have his retention or commitment to reading. Me, I choose to get my study directly from the manual. "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth"- the Bible. For my friend and me, this is definitely the best of times.

But what about those who have little time for reading volumes? As a solution, we need not get caught up in reading alone. Study/formation, by definition, is a way to gain knowledge. To my mind, gaining knowledge can be done in other ways. I have another friend who journals. This can certainly be considered a way to gain knowledge. It is not reading, but, like reading, it does require a little thought and the use of some brain cells so you can put your thoughts and feelings into words. Again, the best of times.

These two processes are not the only way to acquire knowledge. They may be the most time consuming, but for those of us who have little time, why not get creative during your planning? Want some quick suggestions? OK, let's go through some non-traditional things I have done to better myself. I have, upon various occasions, listened to the Rosary in the car during rush hour; listened to worship music while walking the dog; audio Bible during workouts; worship music during vacuuming the house; audio books in the car; podcasts while washing dishes; are we getting the idea here? Again, we are talking about the best of times, but without using the greatest amount of time.

So, as you are sitting around making those New Year's resolutions or finishing up your Reunion group meetings, think about how you can make a plan for your New Year, or, if you want to ease into this study plan, a new week. Start a study/formation plan. Take that first step, and like the "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town" song: "Put one foot in front of the other, and soon you'll be walking 'cross the floor. You put one foot in front of the other and soon you'll be walking out the door." ...or walking the dog...or driving home...or washing the dishes...or vacuuming. Whatever plan you choose, just choose one and do it. Oh, and, taking a cue from that little blue card again, I will pray that you will fulfill your plan and, surely, this New Year will be the best of times.

De Colores,  
Ferch

### **Wanted — Newsletter Contributors**

We hope you are enjoying this issue of the Chicago Catholic Cursillo Newsletter. We want to make the newsletters Community Friendly, Relevant, and Useful. Let this be a tool as part of your Study: Read, Reflect, Live, and Share how you are living the aspects of a Life in Grace. We would like to hear more about what is going on in our Community.

\*\*\*\* Contact Bob or Ellen Chio at (630) 325 – 3711 or email us at [communications@chicagocursillo.org](mailto:communications@chicagocursillo.org).