



The Cursillista

“The Cursillista” is a quarterly publication of the
West River Cursillo Movement.

Volume 7 / September 2025

Ultreya!

Ultreya’s are held on a quarterly basis, and include a potluck dinner. They also include a lot of fine food, faith, and fellowship. The third Ultreya of 2025 will take place at 6 pm Sunday, September 14th, and will be held at Blessed Sacrament Church. Stacey Tate will be our featured witness.

The Ultreya is the sharing of our Christian life. If you haven’t been to an Ultreya for a while, we strongly encourage you to attend. Bring a guest!

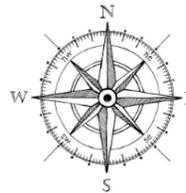
What: Ultreya!
When: 6:00 pm, Sunday, September 14th
Where: Blessed Sacrament Church in Rapid City

Seriously, you won’t want to miss this event. Ultreya’s only come around once every three months, and we encourage you to attend this very worthwhile gathering of the faithful. ☩



The Real North Pole

by Cursillo Spiritual Director Father Andrzej



“Christ is counting on you.”

September 14 - The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

In ancient Mediterranean culture, the cross took on a symbol of shame. This meaning permeated the biblical accounts describing the saving work of Jesus Christ. Not everyone “deserved” the cross. Even if they did deserve death, other methods of execution were used. Among Christians, we also know of cases of beheading, such as St. John, who died at the hands of Herod, or St. Paul, who was—as he himself described himself—a Roman citizen. Thus, death by crucifixion meant more than just torture and a long, agonizing agony. Nor did the “exposure” of the dying to public spitting and insults constitute the greatest tragedy for the condemned. The cross itself—a sign of shame—sufficed for the most grievous humiliation. After all, it wasn’t so much those condemned to death who were hanged on the cross, but rather those excluded from the group of people deserving of a dignified death.

It was a double punishment. It wasn’t just physical pain that mattered, but also psychological grief and bitterness. Christ was stripped of his human dignity. He stood “on the other side of the margin.” The one who broke social conventions to show that all people are equal was himself considered an outcast. Indeed, he became one to the delight of his political and religious opponents.

Paradoxically, the cross, in the person of Jesus Christ, transformed into a sign of victory. In his Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul portrays the Savior as “emptying himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” The Apostle further notes that the source of exaltation, as a consequence of the Son of God’s earlier humility, was his obedience unto death, and—as he emphasizes—this death was on a cross.

For the Christian, the cross is no longer a sign of shame. Although, due to the natural striving of every human being for happiness, no one is obliged to seek humiliation or suffering, much less death, the cross will always remain a challenge for every human being, and this is the moment it appears. In the history of Christianity, one can encounter many attitudes that have distorted the meaning of Christ’s message of the cross. Some wanted to treat the means as the end. They sought suffering, mortified themselves—sometimes to the limits of human endurance.

“The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross prompts reflection on the role of suffering in human life. Perhaps no one doubts that after Christ’s death, one can incorporate one’s individual sufferings into His saving mission and, together with Christ, hang them on the wood of the cross. No one has to seek suffering, but if one is subject to one’s daily life’s inconveniences, one can always seek a way to make sense of them. There is perhaps no better way to find meaning in suffering than by trying to connect it with what Christ accomplished”. (Fr. Jan Dzielny)

When considering the truth about Christ’s suffering and perfect sacrifice, we must not lose sight of His words: “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” ☩

“Christ is counting on you.” - Fr. Andrzej

Message from the Lay Director

Dear 4th day readers,

I would like to thank all those involved in getting the word out for and about the “Cursillo Movement in the Rapid City Diocese” and all areas of Western South Dakota. This year we plan to hold both Men’s (November 6th-9th) and Women’s (November 13th -16th) weekends. Men’s team rector and assistant have been confirmed, Daniel Brechtel and Bill Murphy respectively. Women’s weekend Rectora is still being confirmed as of today(8/19/25). Women’s spiritual advisors include Fr. Andrzej and Sr. Jacque -who are looking forward to the weekend.



In this Newsletter I hope you see the need for your involvement and support. We need more financial sponsorship(s) for the newsletter to continue in the printed version, if you like the printed version and can contribute, please consider making a tax deductible donation to the movement. Please see and help us meet our needed weekend retreat fundraising needs, \$7,000 goal by November. We need strong active 4th dayers to keep the movement going. We have weekends coming in November and need sponsors to encourage their candidate(s) to fill out applications and to attend the weekends (copies of the forms can be found on the Website westrivercursillo.org). We have a soft signup deadline of Mid October, we need at least a minimum

of three candidates signed up to hold the weekend. We need interested 4th dayers to continue attending “School of leaders” to be ready to share the methods of the cursillo as intended. We need 4th dayers to continue to attend quarterly Ultreyas, weekly friendship/group reunions. We need prayers and palanca for the weekend’s success. Thank you again for being a part of this great organization. ☩

Apprentice Christian,
Daniel Brechtel

My Cursillo by Deacon Phillip Thompson

I am a Christian, meaning I believe in and strive to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ which are to love God with all my heart, mind, and strength and to love my neighbors as myself. I could recite the apostles or Nicene creed to verbalize what I believe in, but I am truly called to demonstrate this belief not just in words but in concrete actions. The question then arises, could someone convict me of being a Christian? What evidence could they produce to prove my faithfulness to God? Am I living out my faith?



Yes, we go to Mass on Sundays, maybe even during the week if we are lucky. We can even adhere to all the precepts of the church which are besides attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation are to confess our sins at least once a year, receive Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season, observe the days of fasting and abstinence, and provide for the material needs of the Church. We can do these things, check those boxes but Christianity is so much more. It is a community of believers who are pilgrimaging together through this life with the hope and faith of being able to spend eternity with Jesus in Heaven.

Yet, we live in the world. A world full of distractions, temptations, and noise. It can therefore be difficult to hear and adhere to the word of God. It takes perseverance, patience, and sometimes just true grit to move through this life. We don’t come through it unscathed, however. We all have plenty of old wounds, battle scars, and attachments that we are carrying with us. Jesus heals us and helps us let go of the things that don’t matter. As we grow in our faith, we strive to imitate Christ but even if we can achieve this goal our merits alone will not get us into Heaven. We cannot offer God anything that would suffice to atone for our sins. Jesus however, through his passion, death, and resurrection can offer God a sacrifice that is worthy and which can and does atone for our sins.



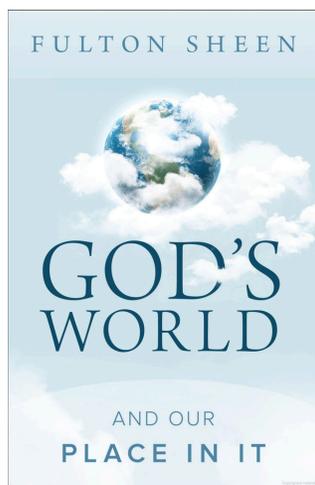
Cursillo, for me, gives me the traction I need to grow in my faith. It breaks me out of routines that are stagnant and unfruitful. I first started meeting the summer after I finished Lay Ministry. Robert Dyczek introduced me to the process of the weekly meetings. Each week as we met, I learned how to share my piety, what I was studying, and what actions I was taking to bring about the Kingdom of God. I have to admit I am an introvert, so sharing in this way has always been a bit difficult for me. However, with time and age I have become comfortable in my own skin and have developed that ability to share my life and my journey to God. I think a lot of times when I was younger what kept me boxed in was the fear of

saying the wrong thing or feeling foolish that I did not know something I should. Cursillo is safe place where we can share our faith journey because no matter where we are at someone has been there and it is inspiring to hear where others are at in their journey. It is said that a high tide lifts all boats, so it is with Cursillo. The sharing of success lifts everyone's spirits while the sharing of failures helps us to stay humble, grounded, and inspired to give it another go.

I truly enjoy Cursillo, our group meets on Saturday mornings at 7am in St. Joseph's Hall at Our Lady of the Black Hills in Piedmont. Our members don't come every week but they all pop in and out throughout the year. It is a joyous occasion where regular guys can share with other how the week has gone. We have coffee and sometimes a sweet snack to perk us up. We continue to meet. We continue to grow in our love of Christ and if someone was looking for evidence to convict me of being a Christian I would point to my fellow Cursillista's and say they will tell you everything you need to know. God Bless you all and keep inviting men and women to join us on this joyful journey. ☩

Deacon Phillip Thompson

Study



Study - "God's World - And Our Place In It", by Fulton Sheen

The last "book review" in June including a report on Fulton Sheen's "Remade for Happiness", a book that I enjoyed a great deal. That book prompted me to obtain another Fulton Sheen book, "God's World - And Our Place In It." As mentioned in the last review, Archbishop Sheen is a really, really smart guy, and a very prolific writer as well.

"In the 1950s, Fulton J. Sheen was one of the most popular television personalities in America, captivating millions of prime-time viewers weekly with enlightening talks on the essentials of Christianity and the moral life.

Relying on the same wise, lucid explanations that won the hearts of so many viewers, Archbishop Sheen here demonstrates that Christianity makes good sense - even to persons with no religious background.

Indeed, argues Sheen, Christianity alone is able to explain the goodness we encounter in the universe and the evil; it alone makes sense of our impulses to love and to sacrifice and our repeated failures to do so. Along the way, Bishop Sheen shows you:

- ☐ How conscience proves the existence of God
- ☐ Why sacrifice is the road to lasting happiness
- ☐ Why there must be both a heaven and a hell, and
- ☐ What you must do to find your proper place in God's world.

If you're not a Christian, you'll come away with a sure sense of why so many good people are. If you're already Christian, you'll come to understand your faith better, learn to explain it to others, and grow in gratitude for God's gift of this world and the glorious role He has called you to play in it."

One of the key elements of Cursillo group meetings that has benefitted me pertains to study. I am on a continuous quest to learn more, and this is truly a great little book. In any case, I hope you enjoy this as much as I did. If the Mustard Seed doesn't have a copy on hand I believe they'll order one for you. Support your LOCAL Catholic bookstore! ☩

Other study materials mentioned at recent Cursillo group meetings include:

- Living the Catholic Faith, by Bishop Charles Chaput
- Called to be Holy, by Cardinal Timothy Dolan
- The Rocking Chair Prophet, by Matthew Kelly
- The Bible in a Year podcast, by Father Mike Schmitz
- The Catechism in a Year podcast, by Father Mike Schmitz
- A Teacher of Strange Things, by Cy Kellett
- Beautiful Eucharist, by Matthew Kelly
- Holy Moments, by Matthew Kelly
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Things Worth Dying For, by Bishop Chaput
- Remade for Happiness, by Fulton Sheen

Important West River Contacts

Position	Name	Contact
Lay Director	Daniel Brechtel	cdbrechtel@gmail.com (605) 209-3389
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Secretary	Nikki Dyczek (Asst - Robert Dyczek)	ndyczek@outlook.com (605) 484-2801
Treasurer	Jim Blackwell (Asst - Ed Lee)	Jimbob75@hotmail.com (605) 923-2955

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 Cursillo Movement PO Box 4072, Rapid City SD 57709 | www.westrivercursillo.org

Other Cursillo News

The National Cursillo website has a wealth of information, including a history of Cursillo, leadership development articles, and other Cursillo literature. The National Cursillo movement website can be found at natl-cursillo.org. There is also a website dedicated to the West River Cursillo movement. That address is <https://withjesusandmary.com/west-river-cursilloa>. ☪

Real Presence Radio

Real Presence Radio is a tremendous asset to the West River community. If you don't listen to RPR, perhaps you should give it a try! Most of the shows are fantastic. RPR performs two primary fundraisers per year – the Spring and Fall “Live Drive”. The Fall Live Drive begins on September 9th:

Our Fall Live Drive is Here!

Join us September 9-11, from 7 AM to 7 PM CT, for Real Stories, Real People, and Real Faith on your local Catholic radio station. Support Real Presence Radio by tuning in to 89.9 / 94.7 FM, calling 877-795-0122, or scanning the codes to give! ☪





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“Make a friend; Be a friend; Bring a friend to Christ.”

2025 Calendar of Events

Secretariat - Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm at Blessed Sacrament Church.

Ultreya - Upcoming Ultreya to be held at 6 pm, 9/14/25, at Blessed Sacrament Church

Cursillo Retreat Dates:

Ladies' 11/13/25 - 11/16/25

Men's 11/6/25 - 11/9/25

Don't miss our next Ultreya!
Sunday, Sept 14th • 6:00 pm
Blessed Sacrament Church
See Page 1 for Details

Christ is counting on you.

The Cursillista is a quarterly publication of the West River Cursillo Movement. Special thanks to Western Mailers for their invaluable contributions producing and distributing this document.