

The Witness

Mount Saint Francis Cursillo Center
Mount Saint Francis, Indiana 47146



You are my witnesses, says the Lord, my servants whom I have chosen [Isaiah 43:10]

Make a Friend, Be a Friend, Bring a Friend to Christ By: Keith Byerley

On July 6, 2006, my brother-in-law, Jake went home to our heavenly Father. Jake was a character. A burly man he ranged in weight from 300 to 520 pounds over the 20 years that we were friends. It was an unlikely friendship as we had little in common other than being in-laws. So it was that we came to share our life stories.

Make a Friend- Jake grew up quick and his early life was no picnic. He shared that he began driving when only twelve years old. His drunken father left it up to Jake to drive his log truck to get them both home. Needless to say he left home at an early age. He spent his early adulthood as a carney traveling the south and Midwest. Numerous tattoos, some of the jail house variety, spoke further of his rough and tumble history. The mechanical skills that he accrued during his stint constructing and tearing down carnival rides served Jake well later in life. In the years I knew him he was seldom far from a garage working on cars and anything else made of iron.

Be a Friend- Jake's health began failing in his early fifties, primarily issues related to being overweight. It was during this time that our talks turned to spiritual matters. My Cursillo retreat had prepared me for these moments, foremost I prayed for Jake and listened to him. He asked if I would get a Bible for him and I did without delay. I've found a lot of my own answers there so I knew this was a big step. A small wooden cross that I made for him presented another opportunity to talk about Jesus and how to pray.

Bring a Friend to Christ- Over the next several of years his health had more valleys than peaks but Jake continued to get around the best that he could. Then his health took a sudden nose dive and he was back at the doctor's office for another round of tests. Already at this point he was certain that he had cancer. His intuition was unfortunately correct. It was indeed cancer, in stage 4, aggressive and terminal. He deteriorated quickly and I visited him frequently. It was during one of these visits that Jake told me of his plan to commit suicide. I took a deep breath and just talked. I spoke of God's will and how we need to trust God to the very end. Our work on earth is not done until God decides so. I told Jake that this was his last chance to teach his children by showing them how to die. He took my words to heart and Hosparus was called in to help with his final days. Jake only lived four months from the time of his initial diagnosis. Again, his intuition kicked in and he announced that he would not see the 4th of July this year. My wife asked him to wait for her because she wanted to be with him at the end.

So in the afternoon of July 2nd we got the call from my sister-in-law that the time was near. We went to be by his side. He was breathing his last as if waiting for us. My wife held his hands, looked in his eyes and told him it was time to go. He went home at that moment as if on queue.

I joyfully gave a eulogy at my big buddy's funeral. I spoke of his soft side, the side that not many got to see.

My sister-in-law, Rose, said she was so thankful to have the last month with him.

They were the most tender and closest that they had in their 21 years together. She later showed me the cross that I had made for him. It was made of hard walnut so I was surprised that it was worn down and smooth as could be. Rose said that Jake had done that with his strong hands wearing it down as he held it and rubbed it between his thumb and finger. Thank God for the courage and strength to be His presence to Jake. Make a friend. Be a friend. Bring a friend to Jesus.



The Witness Online

For pictures, archived articles, and the latest Cursillo news, check out what Steve Volpert is doing at our website — www.cursillo.org/mtstfrancis. Then send your email address to cursillo_msf@insightbb.com to get meeting reminders and real-time updates.

Please help keep our prayer list updated.

Contact Sr. Karen at 812-949-3189 or send an email to: karenbyerley@att.net

In This Issue:

The Blessed Generation	2
The Swim of Things	3
My Journey of Faith	3 & 4
Summer Fiesta Information	4

The Blessed Generation By: Ron Robb

The generation before us that fought in World War II is known as the greatest generation because they sacrificed so much for our freedoms and our way of life as a free people. They also lived through the great depression and came out stronger and carried a spirit that made this country into the most prosperous in the world. Their strength gave us gifts that made us the envy of the world as people from every country migrated here to share in the freedom and opportunities that were abundant in the United States of America. The freedom of religion that we enjoy is probably the greatest gift we have inherited from our ancestors because our spirit is based on our faith in God and how He has guided this country and our people to always have hope because He is with us when we do His will. I was born in 1938 and was too young for World War II and Korea, then when the Vietnam War got going in the mid 1960's I was married and had children so I was exempt.

Since we are the recipients of all these blessings then I consider my generation to be the most blessed generation. I say this because I have seen so many changes since my childhood and of our way of life. I remember having an outhouse (outside toilet) which was supplemented by what we called a slop jar at nighttime so we wouldn't have to go out into the cold in the winter to go to the bathroom. I remember huddling around the radio just to hear parts of our favorite programs over the static. We liked the Lone Ranger, Fibber McGee, Amos and Andy or the Shadow. I remember bringing in coal to heat the kitchen and that was the only room in the house that had heat. My mother used to make me shirts of the chicken feed sacks because we couldn't afford store bought clothes. Yes, my mother was part of that generation that worked hard and gave everything she had to make sure we three kids (my brother, sister and myself) survived those days of emptiness.

I remember the Saturday night baths in the washtub that went by seniority;

my brother was the oldest so he got the first bath, then me, then my sister. By the time my sister got to the water it was pretty dirty but we didn't heat more than one tub of water at our house. She might get lucky and get a warm-up. The only indoor plumbing we had was the kitchen sink and it only supplied cold water so it was quite a job to heat up water for each of us. My dad left when I was 3 years old, right after my little sister was born, so I didn't really know him very well. When I was older I would sometimes read in the paper when he was arrested for public intoxication or disturbing the peace. He never paid any child support or anything so my mother had it pretty tough. She worked at Fines shirt factory on Main Street in New Albany as a seamstress which was a pretty rough job. We never had a car or a telephone until my mother married my step-father when I was about 12 years old.

I finally went to the dentist for the first time in my life because he had health insurance. We never went to church because my mother was kind of an orphan and never understood the true God. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior when I was 44 in 1983 after searching many years for the answer to my emptiness and not knowing what love is, and He showed me His love by His sacrifice for me on the cross. Yes, He freely gave His life for me and was resurrected through the power of God so that my sins could be forgiven. Thus I could be born again as a child of God and have a family of God's people to be my brothers and sisters. I look at my life today and ask why do I have all the blessings I have and why does God love me so much that He would supply me with prosperity beyond my wildest dreams. God opens the doors to His kingdom for us and all He asks is for us to accept His son Jesus as our Lord and Savior. He gives us patience, peace, love, joy, humility and fills us with the Holy Spirit that we can look to for the power to face the daily setbacks and disappointments. Through daily faith and prayer our lives are filled with the love that Jesus wants us to take to a hurting world.

He even gave me my wife Donna that helps me in my Christian walk and is always there to bless me when I fail.

Yes, God has revealed to me, through His scriptures that His love is boundless and despite my human weaknesses He will always be there to pick me up and give me another chance. Why did He chose me to live in the most prosperous country in the history of the world instead of being brought into this world in some third world country with nothing but daily fear of terrorism and hunger? His word tells me that those who have been blessed the most, more is expected of them. When I follow what God wants and do His will it becomes a new way of life that grows into an unending revelation of blessings and transformation through His love and grace.

Yes, His grace is such a blessing that I become free from the everyday tensions and evils of the world and I find the freedom He promises me.

Yes, He promised us a life of abundance if we accept Him as our Lord and Savior but it is still more than we can comprehend in our human minds. It is not because of what we do but because of what He did.

The Following Cursillistas Need Your Prayers

The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal
Ezekiel 34:16

The Franciscan Friars
Brother Ambrose

Ron Byerley & Family

Joe Camarata

Joann Day

Maxe Duffy

Fr. Mike Hilderbrand

Jeff Kochert

O.J. Ignacio

Louisville Women's Cursillo Weekend in July

Patty Luckett

New Cursillistas

Our Catholic Church

Thanksgiving for newly ordained Deacon Jeff

Powell, His wife Sadie & Family

Joe Proctor & Family

The Toler Family

The MSF Cursillo Community

Steve & Alice Volpert

Jack West

The Swim of Things

By: Sister Karen Byerley

I remember a few years back when the personal CD players had been out for a couple of years. I knew I just had to have one. I thought of all ways it would be useful and enhance my life. I finally got one and knew I was in the swim of things. I could listen to my music no matter where I was. My favorite composer, David Haas, and I could go anywhere.

At first I used that thing all the time, never a day without it. Then as time went by I used it a bit less, then a bit less, then a bit less. I have finally gotten to the point where I use it seldom for myself. I have to play seek and find the couple of times a year I really want to have it.

I have a friend who has a similar experience. He loves tools and buys new ones all the time. When he first started buying he had a purpose for each tool and he used them to complete many tasks. Now it seems like he simply buys new tools to hang on the garage walls. Even the power tools line the garage edges. The garage is a Bob the Builder dream.

I was thinking that in some ways my spiritual life might be the same. I have many opportunities to grow in my relationship with Jesus. I leave in a few days for my annual retreat. I will listen attentively and hear many great words. I will spend quiet time with my friend, Jesus. I will experience Jesus in a new way. (I always do so expect the same each year, but in a new way). In time some much of the power of the retreat will simply fade away.

Is it possible for the same dynamic to happen with our Cursillo week-end experience? So many of us leave that Sun. evening so on fire, ready to do what we can to change our lives and in whatever way we can to impact our environments. We have with us a whole new bag of tools, the witnessing from the talks, the prayer experiences, the palanca, the power of the sacraments received and shared. We are inspired and empowered not unlike those few apostles at the Transfiguration. We have the promise of Catholic friends, group reunion and Ultreya to keep us on track and on fire. We are ready to live our Catholic faith with greater intentionality! Our first fervor is a real witness to the new relationship we have with our lover, Jesus. We come to Ultreya to share and witness. We group religiously. (I was talking to an old friend at church a few weeks ago that has been grouping for 32 years.) We might even buy lots of good spiritual literature to aid us in our journey. But like me and my CD player, we might start using these new tools less and less, just a bit at a time until finally we find ourselves sliding back in old patterns of living. We might still use a tool or two when it is convenient or when we are in crisis. Hopefully, we still group whenever we can. Like the tools in my friend's garage, some tools are our favorites and we still use them but the others just hang around, a showcase piece.

My questions to ask myself and each of you are these: What can I do to recapture the fire of my week-end so my fourth day experience is lived with Catholic authenticity? And How do I bear witness to the rest of my Cursillo family? And Do I use all my tools as effectively and affectively as I can? See you at Fiesta!

My Journey of Faith

By: Mark Siener

Seven years ago I never would have thought of it, much less thought of it as *a life long* journey. But now it is the title for how I live my life. Because the Lord has rescued me from a life of being an uneducated ho-hum Catholic, to a Catholic with a real purpose. That purpose is to simply get to know the Lord better every day, and be a soldier for Him. I do that by embracing the Cursillo method.

My faith journey started when I made the Christ Renews His Parish Retreat at St. Joe Hill in 2005. That retreat was my first step toward a journey of faith. My first *real* conversion. It was a few months before my 43rd birthday. It changed my life by helping me understand that my suffering was my cross to carry. As great as the retreat was, and what I got out of it, and the 2 follow ups, we had no lifelong continuation of the journey of faith with brothers & sisters in a community of fellowship.

My life at that time was in shambles. I had lost my 18 year career, was going to be divorced in 3 months, losing my 2 sons and the home I could no longer afford. I was down in the depths of total and complete despair. I was a broken man. I didn't have any faith in God. I didn't know how he could allow this to happen to me. After all I went to church *almost* every week, put my money in the collection, and filled out a stewardship card *almost* every year. How could the Lord let this happen to me? Why all the suffering? Why so much, in such a short period of time?

Well I discovered that weekend that God didn't allow this to happen to me, I did. And believe me, figuring that out caused some suffering too. That's the realization I got from CRHP. That retreat opened my eyes to God's Love for me. He wasn't punishing me. I believe when God's people suffer he suffers with them. I realized that my suffering is my cross and no matter how heavy it gets, it could always be heavier.

In March 2009, I attended a Parish Lenten Retreat at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. There I met a woman that was on fire with the Lord, and she asked me if I would consider going on the Cursillo retreat. I had never heard of it before. I was 46. She explained that it was the most wonderful retreat ever. She said Cursillo was the best because you become part of a spiritual community. A community of brothers and sisters that help each other on their faith journey. I thought wow, that sounds like the real deal. I knew I was being called to experience something like that so I said, "sure when is the next one?" She said, "you're in luck, it starts in 3 weeks". So I got signed up and after just coming off of the Lenten retreat, it was Holy Week 2009. I made the Cursillo #63 weekend. By the time that weekend was over, I was floating on air. I totally embraced the tripod method of Holiness, Formation, and Evangelization.

I started grouping right away, made it to Ultreya's, and I know that Cursillo has been a life changer for me. Since I group with 2 of the *oldest* and most spiritual men I will ever know, my life has had a profound and spiritually enlightening change. These guys are the best spiritual influence I could ever hope to have, besides Christ Himself. They've been, and continue to be great mentors for the Cursillo way of life.

Continued on Page 4.....

Continued from Page 3-Mark Seiner

My Journey is to the Lord, and it is done by finding the Lord in my own unique way, but by using the same method that's been past down since the first Cursillo weekend.

I know now that even with a journey of faith as my strength and my shield, I will still experience suffering. But now I have the tools and friends on the journey to help me through. My faith life cannot be kept or taken from me by anybody but me. Society can take everything, everything I can think of. Except my faith. It's all mine. Probably the only thing I wholly and independently possess. So, for me, **that** makes it a really big deal. I have to protect, feed, and nurture it, so it can grow.

My journey of faith is a blessing. Like yours, it can be, if we allow it, the single most important thing we can experience on earth. It certainly brings us closer to the Lord. It helps us with the virtues. Making us better spouses, parents, parishioners, co-workers, and in general, citizens.

DeColores!

**Please join us for the
Mount St. Saint Francis Cursillo Community
Summer Fiesta!**

When: August 4, 2012
Where: Mount St. Francis Lake Shelter
Time: Fellowship begins at 4:00 pm
Meal will begin at 5:30 pm
What to Bring: Lawn Chairs, Outdoor Games (Optional) and a dish to share. **Meat is provided.**
A-M: Bring Salads or Veggie Dishes
N-Z: Bring Desserts or Fruits

Please bring your family and friends for games and fellowship with your Cursillo Community! We miss you when we haven't seen your for awhile so we pray that you can join us!

Secretariat

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E-Mail your newsletter items to:
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