

# 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]

## Marching On By: Greg Hamilton

When I first went to college at Virginia Tech, I was required to join the Corps of Cadets as a condition of entering Air Force ROTC at that school. I only know of two colleges that have such a cadet corps, Texas A&M and VT. This unique combination of military tradition integrated in a civilian university included a very visible trait – marching.

I showed up a week earlier than the *civilian freshmen* for orientation into the Corps. Much of that time was spent learning to respond to verbal commands immediately and without question, so that the unit would move as one under the direction of a commander. For the next four years I marched in parades, at formations, at football games, and even to my meals. I had no choice but to become good at marching. As time went on, I became aware that to be good at marching and to develop as a commander of a marching unit, it was important to anticipate the commands to come and think rather than moving about like a robot.

As we progress through another Lenten season in our Church, it might feel a bit like marching to you. Without much thought, you formed up on Ash Wednesday and started your annual 40-day march towards Easter. The command was given to not eat meat on Fridays and you responded. You may have had a misstep when you forgot what day of the week it was but you soon fell back in line. You heard the call for prayer, fasting, and alms giving, and you did your best. And when you finally arrive at Holy Week, you'll move step by step from Palm Sunday right to Easter Sunday.

There are good reasons for marching. One person is in charge of making decisions for the unit. Everyone knows what is expected of them and what to expect of the others. Also, marching is a very good way of moving a large number of people in an efficient manner. On the other hand, there is a draw back. When you're marching along, you may not be thinking about why you are doing it. You are doing all the right things at the right times but because you are concentrating on complying with each command, you may not be thinking about why that

command was given.

During this Lent, I encourage each of you to spend a little time contemplating why you are doing the things you are doing. Are you praying the recited prayers at mass without listening to the words you are saying? Try looking at the crucifix and our commander upon it as you recite the prayer. Direct your prayer towards Jesus and see if it makes a difference. Are you fasting on Friday just as a matter of routine? Let the hunger remind you of the sacrifices of Jesus, your need for spiritual discipline, and how many people will go to bed this night more hungry than yourself not by choice but by necessity. Are you participating in almsgiving because someone set up a program to collect your pocket change over Lent? Recognize that by giving back the first fruits of what God has given you, you are changing yourself and improving the world.

Don't just trudge along through these important days of preparation. Study the meaning and traditions behind these days of preparation, especially Holy Week. Work at doing more than just blindly following the 40-day trek to Easter. Work at truly improving yourself as a Catholic and the Lenten Season will come alive for you.

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## The Witness Online

For pictures, archived articles, and the latest Cursillo news, check out what Steve Volpert is doing to our website—[www.cursillo.org/mtstfrancis](http://www.cursillo.org/mtstfrancis). Send your email address to [cursillo\\_msf@insightbb.com](mailto:cursillo_msf@insightbb.com) to get meeting reminders and real time updates.

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Finally, encourage those marching with you to personalize Lent for themselves.

Repent means to "turn away from." Lent is a good time to do an about-face and leave our old ways behind. There is nothing wrong with marching and it's good that we are participating in the Lenten rituals. We just need to remind ourselves that there can be so much more to this season than a dreary hike. Just reflecting on why we are doing what we are doing and anticipating the next maneuver will make this march much more meaningful.

## New Year, What am I Doing? By: Carlos Perez

The new year is upon us. With it comes many opportunities and responsibilities. We are challenged every year with making changes in our life that are sometimes painful and sometimes pleasant. The key to it all is being able to examine our actions and determine if this will improve my life, my relationships, and most importantly, my bond with God. Are the steps I am taking, in this 'new birth' of a new year, improving my relationship with God? This also begs the question, what actions help me improve my relationships with God? The one thing that comes to mind is God Himself. By learning and reflecting on the Gospels, we are able to discover the way Christ dealt with relationships.

One of the things that has always given me hope is that Christ, no matter how many times was let down by the apostles, never gave up on them and never stopped loving them. They could pull off some of the most stupid things and say some of the most idiotic statements, and He, like a loving Father, took them back to the right path and showed them the Way. Most of these situations involved the apostles becoming more prideful and worrying more about themselves. If you look at it, even today, most of the times when we seem to veer away from God, it is because we are thinking of ourselves first. When we put us first, we deny the Love of Christ to be given to another. By that I mean, we do not let ourselves show love and compassion to our neighbor, which in turn shows him the Love of Christ. If we are to be His hands and feet, we must allow ourselves to love those around us. No matter how difficult, we must love our neighbor as our self. Again, here is where the Gospels come in. Where we can be like the apostles and be lead back to the path

of Christ.

This new year we need to concentrate more on the things that bring us closer to Christ. In my deep reflection, I have come to the understanding that the best way to get closer to Christ is to do those things that make Christ come into our lives. Doing the things that bring you closer to Christ is simple, but not easy. We all know the do's and don'ts, and like the apostles, we have all broken the rules, but what keeps us closer to Christ is not because of something we have done. It is because of God's mercy. His mercy alone can right any wrong. We do not deserve His mercy, He gives it to us because of His unending love for each and everyone of us. Not a collective love, but an individual love. His love for me, His mercy for me, is what saves me.

When I am doing the things that bring me closer to Christ, that is when I am at my best. The sense of comfort and peace that comes over me is nothing short of a miracle. We have all experienced those times. Helping someone who is down, offering a helping hand to some one who is burdened, or taking care of some one who is helpless. Stepping out of the 'comfort zone' to bring Christ to someone who is not a believer. We all have our own stories to tell and we all know what it is we need to do to move closer to Christ.

"Lord, how do I know I am doing the right thing?" I ask that question almost daily, and the answer is always the same, "When you do the things that bring you closer to Christ." Remember, I said it's simple, not easy. This new year will bring new challenges, and old ones. It's a time for reflecting on our path and for choosing new ones. It's a time to correct wrongs, to others and to ourselves. So this question will come up time and time again, and I hope the answer is always the same. God has granted us the free will to make these choices. That, by itself proves His love to us. That He gave us the ability to reject Him proves His love for us is with no strings attached. As a parent, we are blessed to know that feeling of unending love with no strings attached. Imagine how we would feel if our children rejected us completely? I truly believe that is what God feels. Only by us freely loving our God do we receive His grace and know His love. The grace and love that we need with us this new year. To tackle the challenges ahead that will beg the question, "Lord, how do I know I am doing the right thing?"

**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  
Sharron Barker  
Keith Byerley  
Ron Byerley & Family  
Joe Camarata  
Joann Day  
Fr. John Geis  
Angela Hayes  
Fr. Mike Hilderbrand  
Kay Hobbs  
Jeff Kochert  
OJ Ignacio  
Terri Jackson &  
Family  
Bernedette Kok  
Patty Luckett  
The Mount Saint  
Francis Cursillo  
Community  
Mary Lu Simpson  
Alice Volpert &  
Family  
Jack West  
World Peace

*Please help keep our  
prayer list updated.  
Contact Sr. Karen at  
812-949-3189 or send  
an email to:  
karenbyerley@att.net*

**Always Moving Forward  
By: Don Kochert**

In October, Suzie and I took part in a pilgrimage to France. It was led by Fr. Steve Banet of St. Jude's Parish in Indianapolis. We were accompanied by 35 other pilgrims from southern and central Indiana.

A pilgrimage is not just a trip; it is "a journey leading us to God." Abraham, Paul, St. Francis and many others were pilgrims. St. Luke's Gospel describes Jesus' life as a journey to Jerusalem. In Hebrews 12:1-3, we are encouraged to rid ourselves of sin, persevere in running the race (pilgrimage), keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. Jesus says, "Come follow me."

So, a pilgrimage is a means of following the gospel; a way to follow God more fully. It is following a road map set up by the first Christian communities, to remember their stories and sayings. I remember Sr. Karen saying in one of her doctrinal talks, "Each day is a new beginning, an opportunity to do God's will." That's what I think of when I say my morning offering. Each day on our pilgrimage was an opportunity to say "yes" and learn how others have followed Jesus.

Remember that the Cursillo Movement was started by a group of pilgrims in Spain on their way to the Shrine of James of Compostela. Perhaps you have watched or will watch the movie "The Way." Several of the towns that we visited were started by pilgrims on their way to the Shrine of St. James. Roads, inns, taverns and restaurants were started to serve the pilgrims.

Where did we go and what did we see in France? Lourdes and the Grotto; St. Emilion, a monastery started by a Benedictine monk; Bordeaux, where we saw a Notre Dame Cathedral and the golden dome of St. Andrew's Cathedral; the Loire Valley, where we had mass in

the St. Marten de Toures Basilica Crypt with relics; St. Malo, a monastic settlement founded by St. Aaron and St. Brendan; (Malo was a follower of St. Brendan.); Mont St. Michael, a Benedictine Abby built on a rocky island that juts out into the waters of the English Channel; Bayeux, where we saw the Cathedral of Notre Dame, a mix of Gothic and Romanesque architecture; the Normandy Coast at Caen, the June 6, 1944 D-Day museum; Point du Hoc, a cliff area where U.S. Army Rangers stormed German fortified gunnery; the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France; Liseux, where we visited the convent of St. Therese, two of her family homes, and the Basilica which contains her tomb; the Cathedral of Rouen (Notre Dame de Rouen "the city of a hundred spires"); the church of St Joan of Arc in Rouen (like many of the early Christian churches, it is designed in the shape of an overturned boat); the Chartres Cathedral with its beautiful stained glass windows dating back to the 1200's; the palace of Versailles, (splendid, but not religious); and finally Paris and another Cathedral of Notre Dame; a cruise on the Seine River, the Eiffel Tower and mass at the Shrine in the Miraculous Medal, (St. Catherine La Boure).

And our pilgrimage was a journey during which we made new friends in Christ, another Christian community.

The inspiring aspect of our pilgrimage was the increased knowledge of saints' lives and the faith of people from the 4th to 18th centuries, building the magnificent churches, cathedrals and basilicas. The disappointing part was learning that, after the overthrow of the monarchy and the reformation period many of the French people stopped practicing their faith. Today they say: "We are spiritual, but not religious". They have no faith community; this makes us all the more appreciative of what we have here at home - a faith community that calls us to grow in being Catholic.

# New Beginnings

By: Sister Karen Byerley

Our beautiful Catholic Church is one that recognizes the gift of inviting us to continually have new beginnings, new starts throughout our life. Let's think of a few words or times when this is so evident:

At Baptism, I am made new, washed with the holy waters, receiving the light of Christ, symbolized with the white garment;

- ....from these sins and all your sins I absolve you;
- ....I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins;
- .....for this is My Body, which will be given up for you;
- ....for this is My Blood, the Blood for the new an eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and the forgiveness of sins.
- ....and forgive us our trespasses;
- ....but only say the Word and my soul shall be healed;
- ....Body of Christ, Amen! (amen, yes, I am!) that is a great new beginning;
- ....go in peace, Glorifying the Lord with your Life!

Thank you God for all the second chances, and the third, and the fourth, and the.....

## Secretariat

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