

Carol Stier
Buffalo Cursillo Historian

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“Calling All Priests.” One of the main factors for the growth of the Buffalo Cursillo Movement in the first five years was a letter from Bishop McNulty, dated April 12, 1966, calling upon priests to make the weekend and to encourage their flock. He wrote: “For the success of this Diocesan-wide movement, the cooperation of the Pastor and Associates is absolutely necessary.”

The letter continued: “It (Cursillo) is a short course in Christianity which has a twofold purpose:

1. To help the person who makes a Cursillo to experience Christian Community living.
2. To help train lay leaders who will aid pastors in spreading Christ’s Gospel.

I encourage our parish priests to ask parishioners to attend a Cursillo together.”

Bishop McNulty’s letter was followed up with a letter by Fr. Dave Doyle, first Spiritual Director, and Lou Pauly, first Lay Director of the Buffalo Cursillo to all priests of the diocese. Their letter stated: “The Cursillos in Christianity are now in Buffalo. This remarkable tool of Christian Renewal is now operating. Five men’s and one women’s Cursillos are now finished.”

“You are going to be asked to sign applications for some wishing to make a Cursillo (all applications must be signed by a priest), (note: no longer required) so for your information here are some of the criteria necessary to make a Cursillo.

1. The applicant must be a Catholic of maturity.
2. He should be a “sensible” person (not an eccentric) and should not have a record of emotional instability.
3. He should not be cut off from the Sacraments in a way that Confession would not restore (i.e. an unfixable invalid marriage.)”

The letter continued: “The best plan is to start by having the priest make his Cursillo either first or with his candidates. When you make your Cursillo you can speak first hand of its effects.” Of course, the initial invitation was to male parishioners and married men who were required to make Cursillo first before their wives.

From 1966 to 1969 over 50 diocesan and religious order priests from the WNY area made Cursillo, as well as numerous seminarians. The invitation to make a Cursillo no longer came from the Catholic paper or at Communion breakfasts, but from the pulpit and parish bulletins bringing a ground-swell of applicants from across the diocese. The support of the clergy provided Spiritual Directors and meeting places for the twelve interparochial Ultreyas.