

Carol Stier  
Buffalo Cursillo Historian

**Buffalo Cursillo History #7 (May 2022 Newsletter)**  
**(continued from last month)**

“The Universal Call to Holiness.” The second factor for the growth of the Buffalo Cursillo movement in the first few years was Vatican Council II which occurred in Rome from 1963 to 1965. In the late 60’s, the Holy Spirit continued to generate the winds of Vatican II renewal affording the American Church a breath of fresh air with the Mass in English and involvement of the laity.

At the same time that Cursillo was taking off in WNY, sermons at Sunday Masses were focused on teaching the faithful and implementing the documents of Vatican II. The “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” and the “Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity” provided a seismic shift in Catholic thought and practice from a “Jesus and me” mentality to full participation of the faithful at Mass and in the life of the church.

The faithful were encouraged to a conscious and active participation in liturgy as celebration. Hence the recourse to English at Mass and in the administration of all the Sacraments (previously in Latin). Mass-goers now took part in the acclamation of English responses, the Psalm, Prayer of the Faithful and recitation of the Our Father; and such actions as the handshake of peace. To further draw in the faithful, the main altar faced the people. Male lectors read the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Readings and Psalm from a podium.

Previously, the Epistle or 1<sup>st</sup> Reading was from the New Testament. The new Liturgy of the Word now included a passage from the Old Testament, a Psalm, a reading from the New Testament followed by the Gospel. (Sermons derived from the Scripture readings at Mass became homilies. More books from Scripture would be included over a 3-year cycle.) This prompted many Catholics to become interested in studying the Bible.

New songs in English, were being sung by the choir and folk groups at Mass. It was perhaps the most exciting time in the life of the Church for many Catholics in the last century.

Mirroring the Council’s call to holiness and emphasis on the apostolate of the laity, Cursillo offered a perfect vehicle and model for Catholics to find God in a Christian Community, which supported the living out of one’s faith, and to become more involved in the life of the Church.