

HISTORY OF THE FILIPINO CURSILLO IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA.

Full Disclosure: I am not part of the pioneer cursillistas that started the Cursillo in SF, the only reason, I was close to the pioneer cursillistas because some are my Ninong and Ninang and I was also longtime volunteer at St. Patrick Church as choir member, I was able to gather a lot of Oral History of the Filipino Cursillo Movement. I counted at least 75 names of the pioneer cursillistas, and I have met 27 of them and as of today 6 are still alive, as I am aware of. (Those who are still alive are: Onie Aguiño nee Bandoja, Pacita Barrameda, Josie Santos, Librada Roldan, Teresita Bisa, Nemesio Gubatan (now a Deacon)).

When Filipinos migrate to some foreign lands, one of the first things they look for are Catholic Churches. In San Francisco, many of them found St. Patrick Church as their second home primarily due to the presence of Fr. Fred Al. Bitanga.

Around 1969 during the usual gathering of some Filipino Immigrants at St. Patrick, under the leadership of Bro. Mike Payongayong and Bro. Nestor Uy, the Filipino Cursillo Community was organized.

Bro. Nestor Uy drafted the Constitution and By-Laws of the above group, which was named FILIPINO CURSILLISTAS OF CALIFORNIA.

The 75 cursillistas, whom we shall call the pioneers in the movement approved the Constitution and By-Laws of the said organization. A transcribed copy of the signature is on the right.

Upon implementation of the constitution and by-laws, Bro. Sid Gloria was first elected president, (in today's term, the Lay Director) serving for 6 months, later followed by Bro. Domingo Cabrera (Deacon later on), Bro. Nestor Uy, and serving one full year each, ending in December for each year.

The first Ultreya was held at St. Patrick's Church, with Fr. Fred Al. Bitanga (Msgr. later on) as Spiritual Director (Advisor).

The first Grand Ultreya was held at St. Vincent School for boys in San Rafael, in 1970, and following that year, in June 1971,

the first Filipino Men Cursillo, (Cursillo #223) was held at St. Benedict Center, the cold but heavenly gym at the corner of Bush and Lyon St. The Rector for Cursillo #223 was Bro. Mars Carbonell. Following slides are the Directory of staff and Candidates.

The first Women Cursillo followed in July 1971 (Cursillo #225). The Rectora of Cursillo # 225 was Sis. Leonor (Nonong) Jacinto.

Note that the numbering of the Cursillo weekends followed the sequence of the weekends held at St. Benedict. Since then, one Cursillo for men and one for women was held.

Fr. Bitanga was the Spiritual Director of the first 2 Cursillo,
As you observe the First Women Cursillo have a separate picture for the Staff only.

Following is the directory of Staff and Candidates.

The early Cursillo weekends were held using the resource materials brought with them by the Immigrant Cursillistas. Later many formats have been experimented, we have a Cursillo with 3 rectors

(Nestor Uy, Day of Faith Rector, Nemsy Gubatan, Day of Charity Rector, and Jun Navarro, Day of Joy Rector),

The next slides show the Directory of Staff and Candidates of Cursillo # 251. Bro. Ric Calma is a graduate of this Cursillo.

The Filipino Cursillo experiment is not over yet.

We also have the first Co-Ed Tagalog Cursillo, (Cursillo #287, held Aug. 22-25, 1974) (Rector was Bro. Doming Cabrera). The following slide shows the Directory of Staff and Candidates. Sis. Merla is a graduate of this Cursillo.

and second Co-Ed Tagalog Cursillo, (Cursillo 289, Nov. 29-Dec 1, 1974) the Rector is Bro. Benny Ruiz. Following slides shows the Staff and Candidates directory. This is the Cursillo that have numerous staff, a total of 54, with 25 Candidates.

In the early Cursillo they had problem with Ultreyas, as the "old ones" were inviting non-cursillistas, and people of different religion, in particular, those who were bald and wearing orange (hari krisnas).

Fr. Bitanga was unable to stop the practice so he left the Movement. He returned hesitatingly after 20 Years. (1971-1991)

In 1973 upon the urging of Bro. Whitney Geiger, the Filipino Secretariat of San Francisco was formed and became affiliated as a Sub-Secretariat of the Anglo Diocesan Secretariat of San Francisco, with Fr. Willam Cane as Spiritual Advisor.

In 1974, Fr. Jack McMullen took over as the Spiritual Advisor of the Diocesan Secretariat of San Francisco and the Filipino Sub-Secretariat. He consistently served as Spiritual Director in our Cursillo weekends. The English Cursillo weekends needed reforms and Fr. Jack wanted to enforce a change but was unsuccessful thereby he resigned and he was replaced by Fr. Mickey McCormick as the Spiritual Advisor. It was also at this point

when the first newsletter "Cursillo Update" was published (I lost the copy of this newsletter). The newsletter was later on replaced by the "Good Shepherd's Voice."

The Newsletter "(Good Shepherd's Voice") met a slow death as witness articles and write ups, biography of the incoming rector/a, Reports to Region XI, weekend pictures and even jokes (as space fillers) has dwindled, plus the cost to print and mail becomes prohibitive. (I remember Sis. Luz Chin printing some of the Good Shepherd's Voice Newsletter in her office, with her manager's approval).

Fr. Mickey McCormick, in 1981, who was too busy with his involvement with the Anglo Cursillo, later on recommended to Archbishop Quinn to appoint Dcns. Bart Pullon and Mar Tano, as Spiritual Advisors of the Filipino Cursillo Secretariat.

At the urging of Sis. Sofie Rualo, we become affiliated with the National Cursillo Secretariat, in 1984. The Secretariat Lay Director at that time was Sis. Carol Bautista. In 2003, under the rectorship of Bro. Jun Mansalay, we were able to secure our first website hosted by the National Cursillo in Dallas. Our website address was www.cursillo.org/sanfrancisco In our premier issue we published the greeting of our Spiritual Advisor Dcn. Mar Tano.

Unfortunately, the website met its slow death as articles slowly trickle in, and I as the publisher wondered why old information were not being replaced. Sis. Mila Ramirez was my most prolific contributor. Today we have new and energetic Cursillistas that created a new website as our way of information dissemination. The new address is <https://www.filipinocursillosf.org/> Hats up to them.

In 1979, the Filipino Cursillistas was fortunate to be invited by the Anglo Cursillo Movement to join in a recording of Filipino Cursillo Music, Mananita and A Very Special Day/De Colores, was sung by the group

In 1993, the deaf community, in conjunction with the Filipino Mananiteros, posed for a picture at the foot of the Chapel for Grand Viva '93 celebration at St. Mary's Cathedral, which served as an invitation to all Cursillistas.

The Filipino Cursillistas Of San Francisco was able to help formed other Cursillo Movement in some other diocese, namely Oakland, San Jose, San Diego, Sacramento (Vallejo).

The San Francisco Filipino Cursillo Movement has also helped in the formation of several Deacons and several Priests. I could name Dcns Lery Prudenciado, Ding Viray, and Ben Agustin, who were graduates of Cursillo #415, Fr. Richard Agustin, Cursillo 383, and Fr. Rico Monton, Cursillo #625, Dcn Oscar Macachor, Cursillo #549, Dcns Ramon "Chito" Zamora and Felix Amora, both graduates of Cursillo #569 (Same Decuria).

From that modest start of the Filipino Cursillo Movement in 1969, up to the time I was maintaining the SFCursillo database, (1996) I have counted over 1,400 names. Some moved on, some disappeared in the wilderness, some became involved in parishes, or other religious movement, some are also missing in action..... (In the Philippines it is called "FALLOUT"), and some were called to be servant in the movement. They are the new breed of evangelizer that kept the Movement going. They are like a budding flowers, that was picked up by Christ, who reached out and called each of us. Each one is different and limited, alone, we are weak, but through Christ Love, He lifted and empower us to reap the new harvest. "The harvest is plenty, laborers are few, come with me into the field." Onward we Go.

I remember Bro. Jess Salazar once asked.....
Where have all the flowers gone?