



KACKY BUELL – Interview on Chicagoland Cursillo

We live in Northbrook and worship at The Village Presbyterian Church of Northbrook, where Greg is the Associate Pastor. We were among the first from Chicago to attend an early Cursillo (OPC 20 in Oklahoma) and bring Cursillo to Chicagoland.

Rev Dave Handley of First Pres Evanston asked Greg and I to meet with him, and in scheduling the meeting the matter felt important. He spoke of a moving of the Spirit; how a few other FPCE members had been involved; how important a ministry he saw this to be; and how very IMPORTANT he felt it was that the Buells should attend a Cursillo weekend, which the church would pay for! It was a huge honor and something to pray about. Knowing and trusting Dave, whether or not we should go was never debated. Our prayer request would be to find a babysitter for our young children. God is amazing because upon leaving the church from our meeting with Dave we ran into the Carmichaels; told them why we were there and how we'd need to somehow find childcare, and immediately they both said, "we'll do it."

We attended Cursillo in Oklahoma and then staffed ChPC #1...and many Cursillo/Pilgrimage weekends thereafter. Looking back over this time I am reminded that Greg and I each experienced the weekend differently—even though everything we saw and heard was the same. We came to the weekend with different levels of Bible knowledge and at different places along our faith journeys. Admittedly, as a participant I didn't understand everything. It's easy enough to understand the love you see and feel and understand the meaningful talks and worship or prayer services, but it wasn't until I first went through staff training that the Biblical significance of some aspects made sense.

During those early years, Greg was often head music cha, then, after seminary, he became a spiritual advisor. I served as head table cha that first weekend, along with Libby Cahalan from OK. Libby was wonderful. Thereafter I often served as head palanca or table cha alongside greats like Alice Rubash, Sonia Bodi, Eleanor Ehresman, Sally Ivaska, Laura Jones—what a joy! We laughed as much as anything.

Pilgrimage is not just a very happy renewal weekend with high quality leadership full of powerful talks from lay leaders and spiritual advisors. It's all that blessed mightily by the power of the Holy Spirit. I've determined that the Holy Spirit has to be behind the work done at Pilgrimage—because regular people follow a planned format for a renewal weekend, yet each time lives are changed significantly. Thank God for Pilgrimage!

I had a big personal transformation while a participant at Cursillo. I was head of a big ministry at church yet was having some trouble with a staff member. In attending the Prayer Service at Cursillo and raising up this concern, the Spiritual Advisor (who was from OK) said he knew this staff person (not a coincidence) and told me that the ministry I worked with was not about him. As simple as that advice was, removing that staff personal from my thoughts about that ministry changed everything about it and changed me. It also allowed the Holy Spirit to flourish without obstruction, and the ministry grew and grew!