

Erie Diocesan Cursillo Movement

Policy Change

June 15, 2019

Effective July 1, 2019: Any person can apply to make their Cursillo in the Erie Diocese at their discretion.

This represents a departure from the previous policy of the Erie Diocesan Cursillo movement requiring a husband make his Cursillo before his wife attends.

Observations

This change is in keeping with the changed policy of the National Cursillo Movement Office allowing a wife to make her Cursillo before her husband makes his Cursillo.

This change is made in recognition that the American culture has changed. Cursillo serves the spiritual needs of the current culture. This does not indicate that what has been done in the past has been wrong, but rather that the culture within which Cursillo serves has changed. Failure to recognize and respond to these changes causes the movement to lose relevance as a method of spirituality.

This policy can be reversed if it proves to be ineffective or damaging to the overall Diocesan evangelization work.

Additional Comments

Strong and passionate opinions were expressed in both the email submissions by Cursillistas and at the four town hall meetings held earlier in 2019 (St. Marys PA, Hermitage, Conneaut Lake and Erie).

Some Cursillistas wanted to keep the policy intact or to modify it slightly to allow easier accommodation of individual needs. Some comments for keeping the policy unchanged included the following: be faithful to the original mission, don't change what has worked so well for so long. There were questions about the origin of the discussion initially.

Some Cursillistas wanted to change the policy. Among their reasons the following comments were recorded: the current policy about husbands needing to make their

Cursillo before the wife makes hers seems paternalistic in our current culture; make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ but only if the husband goes first; it's a graced moment when anyone makes their Cursillo; family life is definitely different now than fifty years ago – change reflects recognition of the fact; speaking on behalf of single parents, one Cursillista made the observation that the “primary parent” needs support; when a wife can't make her Cursillo because her husband will not make his Cursillo, the kids are systematically excluded from the grace of their parent's participation in the movement; Cursillo makes marriage better regardless of who attends first, and “women are good evangelizers too.”

A Final Observation

The primary reason supporting this change in policy is that Cursillo is truly a gift from God inspired by the Holy Spirit. The fact that Cursillistas have demonstrated the depth of passion for and against the policy change indicates that they love Cursillo as a method of spirituality. Although increased Candidate attendance is always desirable, the purpose for this change is not primarily to increase attendance. Anecdotal reports from around the U.S. indicate that Cursillo thrives more in some areas of the country than others. This is true even within our Diocese. It seems quite wise to continue searching for insights (answers when possible) to the following question: How can the Erie Diocesan Cursillo movement better serve the current spiritual needs of all (not only Catholics) people living within our Diocese?

I hope that passionate Cursillistas will consider holding regional GR's (for lack of a more descriptive title) beginning in the very near future to work out a Spirit-inspired response to the question.

De Colores!

Msgr. Dan Arnold
June 15, 2019