

Cursillo Ultreya Witness Talk for May 2nd, 2026
by Rick Holmstrom

Please pray with me ...

(*Make the sign of the cross *)

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of us your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray ...

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that by that same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

(* Make the sign of the cross *)

Good evening, everyone, my name is Rick Holmstrom and my wife Donna, and I worship at St. Peter Catholic Church in Jupiter.

I experienced Cursillo #59 in 2017 at Our Lady of Florida and I sat at the table of St. Thomas Moore.

For those of you who may not be aware, I am currently in my 2nd year of formation in the diaconate program for the Diocese of Palm Beach.

Since I made my Cursillo, my journey in our Catholic faith has exploded in ways that I could not have imagined. I am a cradle Catholic and had experienced many spiritual retreats from my early teens into my 20's, so when Donna and I were asked to attend a Cursillo weekend, I immediately associated it with my past retreat experiences and as you know, that notion was just "slightly" off. When I attended retreats in the past, I always felt as if I had gained a little faithfulness from attending and was always glad that I had gone. The Cursillo weekend definitely seemed to be something more, something was different about it. I did not really know what it was at the time and little did I know that God had much more in store for me than I could have ever imagined.

After our weekend, Donna and I began to grow closer to God and to each other. We began to have more spiritual discussions and began praying together, something we had rarely done previously.

The next thing I knew, I was asked to be part of the team for the next Cursillo weekend. I agreed and subsequently served on several teams. Each time I was blessed with something unexpected.

One of these unexpected blessings came on a Cursillo weekend, when I was having a friendly conversation with someone I knew from St. Peter's, Deacon John Collins, who simply asked me if I had ever thought of continuing to grow deeper in my faith. At first, I was not quite sure what he was asking me, but then it dawned on me, he was asking me if I ever had thought of becoming a deacon. Well at the time I tried to dismiss the idea, but the thought would not leave my mind. For literally a year and a half I had these constant battles within my mind. A battle between a little devil on my left shoulder and a little angel on my right and they were really duking it out. Eventually the little angel was victorious, and I said yes to the Lord's calling for me to follow Him in a more dedicated way. Since then, I have learned so much from my studies at the Seminary and from the Holy men that have been a presence in my formation but still have a long road ahead of me. With the help of the Holy Spirit, I am confident that I will get there.

As mentioned earlier, I am a cradle Catholic and have begun to have more spiritual based discussions with friends and co-workers, including some non-Catholics. On one occasion recently at work I walked into the boss's office to turn in some paperwork and the boss (who is a non-practicing Catholic) and our H.R. guy (who is Protestant) were having a discussion about "communion" (they did not use the word "Eucharist") and the boss asked if I believed in the true presence of Jesus in Communion, to which I responded ... "Absolutely – Body, Blood, Soul &

Divinity.” The boss stated that he did not, and the H.R. guy asked ... “Can that be found in the Bible?” And I replied that it was, but was not able, off the top of my head to site chapter and verse (now I know – John 6:48-57, “*I am the bread of life*”). At that moment the boss’s phone rang with a call he had to take and that ended our brief discussion. That took place on a Friday, and I ended up thinking and praying about it for the next couple of days. Then on Monday morning I found myself with the two of them once again and the Holy Spirit prompted me to ask them ... “hey guys, when we were talking on Friday about the real presence of God in “Communion” (I specifically used their term), I wanted to ask you a couple questions. They nodded as if to say okay. I continued ... “Do you believe that Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana?” They both quickly responded, “yes.” Then I asked ... “Do you also believe the creation account in Genesis, that God created the heavens and earth --- all that surrounds us?” They once again quickly replied “absolutely.” So, my third and final question was ... “But you find it hard to believe that He can transform ordinary bread and wine into His Body & Blood? They did not answer so quickly this time and kind of looked at each other with somewhat “stunned” expressions on their faces and it was then that I felt that, perhaps the Lord may have flipped a switch on in each of their minds. The boss finally spoke and said, “Good point” and the H.R. guy said, “I never looked at in that way before.” All I did was look to God for some guidance and

allow Him to provide me with the words to express **what He wanted them to hear.**

Now I began to understand what evangelization was about. It was not what I had always envisioned it to be --- someone preaching fire and brimstone to sinful people. All it takes is being aware of opportunities that God gives each of us to spread the love of Christ to someone else, in action, word or deed. The more each of us makes it a habit to spend some time each day to pray, read scripture and grow in our relationship with Jesus, the more He will entrust unto us. To me it all simply comes down to “planting seeds” for Christ. As stated in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew (13:23) ... *“However, the seed sown in rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirty times what was sown.”* We do not need to worry if we are planting seeds in rich soil or not, God will take care of that, He just wants us to be His voice and plant that seed for Him. Deacon John did not know if the seed he planted for Jesus in me was going to bear fruit or not, but he planted it anyway and God took it from there.

Through some of my classes and discussions with a few of my brothers in formation, some of which are converts from other Christian denominations, I realized that as a cradle Catholic, I was always told **what to do** and **when to do it.** What **I was not told was why we do it.** There were some aspects of the Catholic

faith that I had knowledge of, but far more that I had “no clue” about. One thing that the Holy Spirit impressed on me was the need for good, solid Catholic teaching to our youth, including the “why” part. Individually, we do not need to provide our youth with all the answers, we simply need to plant a seed within their souls, and the Holy Spirit will take it from there. Some of the seeds we plant may not grow, but others will and those are the ones that God will tend to and make fruitful. Through our Baptism, we are all called to evangelize. As we say in Cursillo ... “Make a friend, be a friend, and bring your friend to Christ.” This can be accomplished in many ways, and most will cost us absolutely nothing. Invite someone to attend Sunday Mass with you or ask if they would be willing to experience a Cursillo weekend are some examples. You can also do little things each day, like holding open a door for a stranger, offering someone a complement, or a kind word, even something simple as a smile. All of these are contagious, they evoke good feelings, they are ways of spreading love and kindness to our neighbors, something that Jesus wants us to do.

Just as Jesus gave His Apostles the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to empower them to spread the Word of God to all people, so too does He give each of us the Holy Spirit to be witnesses of His love. When I was searching for a scripture passage to use in my talk this evening, I noticed that the Gospel Acclamation for

Pentecost Sunday (which is on May 24th this year) is... “Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love.”

We **are** His Faithfull!

We **are** praying for Him to give us the words to evangelize.

We **are** planting the seeds to bring others closer to Him!

He **is** counting on us!

and

We **are** counting on Him!

May God continue to pour out His blessings on each one of us.

Amen.