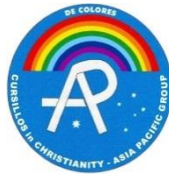


Margaret Morris, President
Rev, Fr John Armstrong, Spiritual Advisor
Merran Martin, Secretary



John Andrews, Vice President
Rhonda Porteous, Treasurer

**OMCC President, Juan Adolfo Moguel Ortiz,
OMCC Executive Committee,
International Groups
OMCC Work Team**

13 January 2020

Greetings Dear Friends,

We have been most grateful for the message of Pope Francis at his audience last Wednesday to the people of Australia that he is close to us in our hour of need. We also thank you Juan Adolfo and others in our Cursillo family for your promises of prayer support. This means a lot to us and helps us to remember that the Lord is with us.

The unprecedented bushfires have been raging for several weeks now, including over the Christmas/New Year period. 107,000 square kms have been burnt so far, 28 people have died and over 5,909 buildings including homes and businesses have been destroyed. Millions of animals unique to Australia have burnt to death. At the same time, we have seen the generosity of the human heart in the care and assistance of strangers, the selflessness of the firefighters and acceptance by those who have lost everything.

Though we are powerless to withstand the forces of nature, we can still be a light for our neighbour, even under the cloud of smoke that is enveloping us.

We are sustained by the words in Isaiah 60:2-3:

*See darkness covers the earth
And thick clouds cover the peoples
But upon you the Lord shines
And over you appears His glory
Nations shall walk by Your light
And kings by your shining radiance.*

Throughout the world we all need to heed the words of Pope Francis in Laudato Si to take care of our earthly home, to ensure that the right policies are in place and do what we can to mend the climate.

Please join with us in praying not only for abundant rain in Australia, but also for longer term solutions for the extreme weather that we are seeing across the world.

We enclose a copy of a message from National and APG Spiritual Advisor Fr John Armstrong on the 15th December to the Cursillistas of Australia:

With all the smoke and raging bush fires surrounding Sydney, Brisbane and many of our regional centres, the impact on daily life has been sorely felt. This is not only waking up to a day when we can't clearly see the sun or when we feel oddly out of sorts as we struggle with the effects of the inhalation of the smoke. There is a sense in which our anticipation for Christmas seems to be postponed or put on hold as we consider what is going to happen at this moment. We are called to be on alert and to have a plan about what will happen if the fire comes too close. If we leave, where will we go where we know we will be safe? If we stay, are we fully prepared to fight the fire? These are life-changing choices which need to be carefully considered not just for ourselves but for those we care about.

So, in this context how are we called to watch and act when the fires do not threaten us? There is a necessity that we do understand our environment in which we live and the fragility of our own lives.

**ASIA PACIFIC GROUP CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
CURSILLOS IN CHRISTIANITY
email: margiejm@gmail.com**

Margaret Morris, President
Rev, Fr John Armstrong, Spiritual Advisor
Merran Martin, Secretary



John Andrews, Vice President
Rhonda Porteous, Treasurer

This does not mean we are called to live in fear of creation but rather to consider how we do not live apart from creation. We are called to be people who act responsibly not just for the moment but also for every moment. There is a need to recognise that we are gifted with the place we live not just for ourselves only but so that we can be stewards who are able to pass it on to future generations. This allows us to understand the simple ways in which we can care for the environment and care for each other which sustains all life.

As we notice, Christmas is different in Australia. Whereas in traditional scenes it would be raining snow, here it has been raining ash. Yet in the face of such contradictions, we are called to encourage each other and reach out to each other. We pray with and for the firefighters who have faced overwhelming situations with great courage, skill and resilience. We pray for those who have lost their homes that they may find a place of welcome which will help them to rebuild shattered dreams. We pray for our politicians and public servants that they may have wisdom in guiding people to act in the common good. We pray for ourselves that our fears may not overwhelm us and that our hopes may transform us into people who bear witness to Christ with our lives.

DE COLORES,

Margaret, Fr John, Merran, John & Rhonda
ASIA PACIFIC GROUP EXECUTIVE
CURSILLOS IN CHRISTIANITY
AUSTRALIA

ASIA PACIFIC GROUP CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
CURSILLOS IN CHRISTIANITY
email: margiejm@gmail.com