

Honduras Reports 'Little Miracles' From Cursillo

By DAVE MANGURIAN
Tegucigalpa, Honduras—The tall Honduran rose to his feet, announced his name and boasted: "I have 10 children by my wife and 16 by other women. I have five official assassinations to my credit and 15 unofficial ones."

Then the paid political strong man went through the experience called Cursillo de Cristiandad (Short Course in Christianity). For three days and nights he lived together with the 39 other men he had boasted to and heard talks on Christian doctrine by priests and laymen.

and now cursillos have become "the thing to do," the priest says.

The underground Communist party even started sending members to cursillos, Father Prestera says, "but too many got converted and they don't send them any more."

As the cursillo movement grew, the government, still a little shaky after its takeover by a coup in 1963, began calling it a political movement to promote the Christian Democratic party.

The attacks stopped abruptly

when Father Prestera invited President Oswaldo Lopez Arellano to attend the next cursillo, then leaked the news to Tegucigalpa's leading newspaper, El Dia, which ran the story across its front page.

Cursillos have now been conducted in many parts of the country for both women and men. In addition to business men, politicians, university professors and poor campesinos also attend them.

"A little trick we use," says Father Prestera, "is to assign a rich man to a room with a campesino (farmer). At first

he's ready to walk out. But by the end of the day, he realizes that campesinos are such wonderful people."

The cursillistas came out of their cursillos fired up.

"We teach love in the cursillos," Father Prestera said. "If the motivation of love is deep enough, you can't ignore the injustices of the world around you. You have to do something."

One thing the priest did do was set up the Association of Human Progress in which cursillistas could work as volunteers. It is the only non-politi-

cal social action organization in Honduras.

The association has, among other things, run leadership training courses for campesinos. In less than two years, these campesinos have organized their towns to build 37 schools and more than 200 miles of roads to open up their communities and to establish numerous cooperatives.

Now, funded by close to \$200,000—most of that from overseas relief agency—the association has expanded to a full-time staff of 12. Plans in-

clude making low-interest agricultural loans to campesinos and financing 10,000 low-cost housing units for Tegucigalpa.

Says Conrado Napky, association president: "People in Honduras are Catholics because it is traditional. But maybe 80% have never been to church. I think if 10% of the people take the cursillos, we will have the solution of many of our country's problems."

If so, that means Father Prestera still has 80% of his task ahead of him; there are 2.4 million Hondurans and only 2,400 cursillistas so far.

'Sacred Heart Messenger' To Cease Publication

New York City—The Sacred Heart Messenger, a national Catholic monthly magazine with a circulation of over 100,000, will cease publication with its December issue, which is being distributed now.

In a joint announcement, the publisher, Rev. Emmet J. Norton, S.J., who is also the national director of the Apostleship of Prayer, and the editor, Rev. Daniel F. X. Meenan, S.J., stated that the decision to cease publication was not an easy one. It was reached only after serious deliberation, they said.

"During its 101 years," Father Norton and Meenan stated, "the Messenger has made a

significant contribution to the spiritual vitality of the Catholic Church in the United States.

"One of America's oldest Catholic magazines, its first issue was published in April, 1866. It was from the Messenger that the weekly magazine, America, came into being. The Messenger also had an influence in the beginnings of such Jesuit publications as Thought and Jesuit Missions.

DEADLINE FOR NEWS MONDAY NOON FRIDAY DELIVERY

NBC Studio

The many changes through the Roman Church in America named by NBC News Channel in Transmittal Catholicism in the States' Sunday, Dec. 10 p.m. (NYT) on Radio Network.

This broadcast of "Second Sunday" series will be report News correspondent The program will be by Albert Burchard.

The program will views of priests, for and Church authorizing John Cardinal K

Afterward, he quit his job as a paid assassin, gave up his mistresses and went back to farming.

A former leader of the now out-of-power Liberal party used to travel the country with a pistol and his mistress. A friend who knew him then says he was "an unscrupulous politician who lived for politics—so anticlerical he tried to persuade several fallen priests to run for office."

Last year, after taking a cursillo, he willfully committed political suicide to hold to his new religious convictions. He resigned as party boss rather than back his party's stand against teaching religion in the schools.

Several years ago, a young communist who had trained in Cuba to become a bomb expert and had fought with guerrillas in Guatemala, came to Honduras to organize young Communist party members.

After attending a cursillo, he left the Communist party and is now studying for the priesthood.

The cursillo movement, started in Spain in 1949 by Bishop Juan Hervás de Mallorca, is growing throughout most of the Americas.

In Honduras, the three-year-old movement is doing more than reconverting Hondurans to Catholicism; it is one of the forces exerting change in this Central American country.

In three days and nights cursillos are getting Hondurans to commit themselves to better the morals and standard of living in their country.

After attending cursillos, many businessmen have raised the salaries of their employees, some of whom were earning less than \$10 a week.

There are now 2,400 cursillistas in Honduras, including 60 politicians, 30% of the national university's professors and 40 former communists or sympathizers.

The founder of the cursillo movement in Honduras is Father Vincent Prestera, a 46-year-old missionary priest who was sent here in March, 1963, by the archdiocese of Newark.

Not long after he arrived, he says, he wrote to his archdiocese: "I might start a school in 50 or 100 years," explaining: "You can't teach ritualistic religion when half the people are hungry."

He then turned to organizing cooperatives.

Father Prestera borrowed \$30,000 and organized the river shack families to build their own low-cost housing project—the first in Tegucigalpa.

"The idea of the housing project was to promote a guilty conscience that could be converted to social commitment. All along I knew the project would lead to more," the priest said.

Tegucigalpa's newspapers published numerous stories on the housing project, and Father Prestera became almost famous in the city overnight.

Taking advantage of the publicity, he began calling on some of the city's businessmen and public officials to persuade them to attend his first cursillo, the vehicle he thought would best convert the guilty conscience to commitment.

The first 40 cursillistas went mostly out of curiosity. After the first, getting people to sign up for a cursillo was no prob-

Men's Club Xmas Party

Members of the Sacred Heart Men's Society of St. Anthony's parish, Elmira will hold their annual Christmas party in the parish center Sunday, Dec. 10.

The social program will start at 2 p.m. under the direction of Philip Marino and Joseph Carrozza.

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