

CURSILLO SWFL WEEKEND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

The direct and indirect financial costs of attending a Cursillo Weekend ('Weekend') can be daunting to some, may serve as a distraction during the Weekend or may be a deterrent for an individual to even apply to attend. While the costs are necessary, the lack of personal financial resources should not be the sole reason preventing someone from attending a Weekend if they desire. The individual attendee ('Pilgrim') or Team Member, their Sponsor and clergy, and the local parish Cursillo Community ('Ministry') all have roles and responsibilities specifically related to meeting the financial obligations for attending a Weekend.

- THE ROLE OF THE PILGRIM OR TEAM MEMBER

Given the very personal nature of an individual's personal finances, many people find themselves unwilling to talk, even in confidence, of their personal situation. For this reason, delicate questions and admissions to needing financial aid often go unasked or unanswered. While it is common practice for those that are blessed with abundant resources to pay the full Weekend price, others may need to ask for and seek financial assistance. It is generally accepted that everyone attending a Weekend pay at least a minimum amount as a sign of individual dedication, devotion, and sacrifice.

- THE ROLE OF SPONSORS AND PARISH CLERGY

The pre-Cursillo preparation includes responsibilities of Sponsors and local parish clergy. These responsibilities, covered elsewhere, are intended to prepare the Weekend Pilgrim to apply for, successfully attend a Weekend, and transition back into the local parish Cursillo Ministry. These responsibilities include identifying and preparing with the Pilgrim a plan for solving, among other things, any financial concerns the Pilgrim or Team Member may have before the Weekend application process begins. Confidentiality is an important concern, and may require clergy assessment with the Pilgrim or Team Member to determine how best to resolve spiritual as well as financial fitness prior to submitting a Weekend application.

- THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL PARISH CURSILLO MINISTRY

Like any other local parish ministry, each parish Cursillo Ministry is encouraged to have local programs specifically designed to help their parishioners attend Weekends as Pilgrims and/or as Team members in order for the Cursillo Ministry to remain vibrant and relevant within their parish. These programs should include, among other things, methods for helping offset the financial burden of Weekend attendance when financial help is needed. These programs are beyond the oversight of the Cursillo Secretariat and are limited only by the imagination and dedication of the local Cursillo Ministries to build a sustainable ministry. Some parishes have funded a Cursillo line item in their budget for this purpose.

- THE ROLE OF THE DIOCESAN CURSILLO SECRETARIAT

The Cursillo Secretariat for the Diocese of SW Florida ('Secretariat') shall establish a policy, procedure, and form for awarding monetary scholarships for those needing financial support in order to attend a Cursillo Weekend. Funding levels for these scholarships are not guaranteed to be available Weekend-to-Weekend and should not be considered as the sole-source for funding Weekend attendees.

CURSILLO SWFL SECRETARIAT SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

- I. SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHMENT
 - a. **Funding.** Any funds received by the Secretariat specifically designated for Weekend scholarship use shall be accounted for in a designated 'Scholarship' account using generally accepted accounting practices. The Secretariat may from time to time allocate any undesignated funds, donations, contributions, etc., received for scholarship use. The Secretariat Treasurer may allocate funds as being 'designated' or 'undesignated' (or similar terms) for scholarship funding identification and reporting. The balance of funds in this/these account(s) shall be reported through normal Treasurer reporting practices.
 - b. **Sub-Accounts.** The Secretariat shall not maintain separate accounting for any parish, deanery, or sub-accounts for individuals. Any scholarship programs implemented at lower organizational levels are the responsibility of those organizations.

- II. SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING MANAGEMENT
 - a. **Scholarship Accounts.** The Secretariat shall establish methods for depositing scholarship funds in accounts which may include, but not be limited to, savings/checking accounts, money market accounts, certificates of deposit, or other financial vehicle designed to balance ease of access with funding growth through interest on principal. The Treasurer will monitor account status and make funding management recommendations as needed or requested. The Secretariat may approve changing account vehicles as necessary based on a simple majority vote.
 - b. **Withdrawing Scholarship Funds.** The Secretariat may approve from time to time, by a simple majority vote, to withdraw all, some, or none of the scholarship funds based on the needs of the Cursillo Ministry. In all cases, funds in a 'designated scholarship' account shall only be withdrawn for the purpose of funding financial support to Cursillo Weekend attendees. Funds deposited in an 'undesignated scholarship' account may be withdrawn to offset extraordinary operating expenses or to offset costs of or provide financial aid to Weekend event attendees.

- III. SCHOLARSHIP REQUESTS
 - a. **Secretariat procedures.** The Secretariat shall prepare and widely publish through various media detailed step-by-step procedures for submitting scholarship requests. These procedures are subject to revision and is incumbent on individuals, sponsors, and parish rectors/clergy to understand the current process in effect.
 - b. **Parish-level scholarship programs and policies.** The Secretariat will encourage local parishes to establish specific programs and policies for offsetting Cursillo Weekend/Event costs for attendees. The Secretariat

shall have no management or oversight responsibility or obligation for parish-level scholarships. These programs should result in a method for identifying financial need, how much of that need is funded by the individual, how much is funded by the local parish, and how much financial support is being requested by the Secretariat. Clergy involvement in all steps of financial aid determination is essential.

- c. **Funding limits and award process.** The Secretariat may choose to limit the total scholarship funds available from time-to-time based on prudent financial decisions. The Secretariat may provide advance notice through various media of any limits imposed and/or provide any open dates for accepting financial requests. The Secretariat may choose to award scholarships using several methods including, but not limited to:
 - i. First-come first served until funding is exhausted
 - ii. Approve highest needs first until funds are exhausted
 - iii. By lottery draw
 - iv. Other method as approved by the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall notify the Diocesan Cursillo Community via multiple media outlets to ensure all are aware of and understand the scholarship award process.

- d. **Requests for financial support.** The Secretariat shall create a Scholarship Request Form that specifically documents the financial plan for each individual seeking Secretariat scholarship support. At a minimum, this form should include:
 - i. Applicant's name,
 - ii. Home parish,
 - iii. Specific dollar amount the individual is contributing,
 - iv. Specific dollar amount the parish community is contributing,
 - v. The amount (remainder) that is being sought by scholarship based on published Weekend costs,
 - vi. Parish rector/clergy signature acknowledging the requested funds.
- e. **Confidentiality.** Scholarship requests should be handled as sensitive information and not be broadly published or discussed. They may be submitted at the same time as the Weekend application or may be submitted in advance upon notification of a scholarship request submittal window. Common sense should rule during reviews, discussions, and approval/rejection notifications. In most cases, requests for additional information and replies should be directed to/from the individual's local rector/clergy and designated Secretariat spokesperson. When necessary, the Secretariat Spiritual Director(s) will communicate directly peer-to-peer with local parish rector/clergy to ensure confidentiality.
- f. **Minimum contribution.** All requests for scholarships shall indicate that the individual and/or the local parish community is contributing a **combined total of at least 50%** of the total Weekend cost in effect at the time of the Weekend application and/or as published by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will normally only approve scholarships totaling **no more**

than 50% of the total weekend costs. *Scholarship requests for more than 50% of the cost of the Weekend will only be awarded on rare occasions and may require additional information and justification by the local rector/clergy.*

IV. SCHOLARSHIP APPROVAL.

- a. **Secretariat review and approval.** The Secretariat shall receive and review all requests for scholarship assistance within the criteria in effect at the time of submittal. If approved, the Secretariat, through the Treasurer and Registrar, shall transfer funds from the appropriate 'scholarship' account and apply the funds against the Weekend costs in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. *At no time shall scholarship funds be made payable directly to individuals or parishes.*
- b. **Approval Status Notification.** The Secretariat shall develop a process to notify the local parish rector/clergy as to the approval status of each Scholarship request. *In no case shall the Secretariat directly notify the individual Pilgrim as to the status of the scholarship request. Such notifications will be the responsibility of the parish rector/clergy.*

V. APPROVAL STATUS RESOLUTION

- a. **Peer-to-peer resolution.** The Secretariat Spiritual Director(s) and the local parish rector/clergy will make every attempt to resolve any such conflicts concerning the scholarship application and review/approval processes in a confidential peer-to-peer manner. Any such conflicts should be handled quickly so as to not disrupt the normal pre-Weekend, Weekend, and post-Weekend cycle.

CURSILLO SWFL SCHOLARSHIP PROCEDURE

Time Prior to Weekend	Action	By Whom
6 months	Determine total amount of scholarship funding available and announce method for approval, i.e., first come – first served; greatest documented need paid first; by lottery; etc.	Secretariat
4 months	Publish dates for accepting scholarship requests and provide details for submitting the Scholarship Request Form.	Secretariat
3 months	Determine scholarship need-basis for each Pilgrim.	Sponsors
3 months	Prepare and submit a Scholarship Request Form for each Pilgrim requiring scholarship assistance.	Local parish rectors/clergy
2 months	Review and approve scholarship requests based on established selection criteria.	Secretariat
6 weeks	Notify local parish rector/clergy of approval status.	Secretariat
6 weeks	Move scholarship funds to appropriate payment area.	Treasurer
6 weeks	Submit partial payment to the Registrar when requested for a Pilgrim, or to the Bellringer at the first team meeting for a Team Member.	Local parish rector/clergy

Throughout this process – Let Christ be our Guide and Shepherd and give Him all the Praise and Glory for the many Blessings we receive through Him.

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