

SUNDAY OF THE 3 DAY CURSILLO

Please allow me to take all of you on vacation. Not literally, but for the purposes of this talk. We have spent months of planning, looked at brochures, invested ourselves, and our money, for a special time of rest and relaxation. And, after much anticipation, the time has arrived. But, alas, it is the final day. Like so many times in our lives, good things come to an end...Or, do they?

I went to Florida on vacation many years with my brother and a friend. Let's call him Duane (because that is his name). On the final day of vacation, all Duane focused on was cleaning, packing, and planning our return trip to the airport. Since we had a late day flight, my brother and I envisioned the beach, perhaps a last cold beer within eyesight of a bikini or two. Unfortunately, we were staying at Duane's parent's home, and he was in charge. Our exotic trip to the beach was replaced with a trip to the laundromat, the carwash, and an earlier than needed arrival at the airport. I'm a single man in my twenties, and I'm bringing clean underwear back home from vacation. My mother will be proud of me. We don't vacation with Duane anymore.

You get the picture. The journey that we are on together is the Sunday of the 3 day Cursillo. It is the final day with our new brothers and sisters in Christ, the day of insertion back into their environments. It is the day that sets Cursillo apart from all other lay Catholic movements, in that the retreat experience need not end. Yes, it is the day that we will teach the candidates, who have become our new friends in Christ, the importance of the Cursillo method of piety, study, and action. It is human nature to anticipate change in our lives, such as the end of a vacation. But, doesn't Cursillo offer more than a fleeting and "feel good" time? You bet it does. So, let's not pack our bags, or our minds and hearts, for that return trip back home. Leave your dirty underwear for another day. Let us embrace these last special moments together on the Cursillo Sunday, the Lord's Day!

Our Sunday starts with prayer in the chapel. Our spiritual director leads us in the 5th meditation of the weekend, "The Message of Christ to the Cursillista". Jesus is addressing our new brothers and sisters as individual persons and calling

them to penetrate their environments with the Gospel. The spiritual director emphasizes the discovery of one's personal vocation, and the necessity of a support community. This meditation is a challenge to do great things, with an assurance that it is possible to accomplish great things with the support of a loving community. This meditation reinforces the encounter begun in "Action" and "Leaders". It asks the Cursillista the question "'For Whom Does Christ Call Us". The spiritual director draws heavily from Jesus' final discourse in John 14-17, and applies the scripture to the development of that particular Cursillo weekend. For example, John 15:5 states "Whoever remains in me, with me in Him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me, you can do nothing". If we are to bear fruit in our environments, then our progressive conversion must continue long after the weekend is a memory. Christ gives us courage to bear this fruit; He has already won the victory for us, we must only follow Him. John 16:33 states: Have courage: I have overcome the world."

After breakfast, we gather in the rollo room for the "Study of the Environments" talk. In this phase of the Cursillo, we give attention to the different areas where a person's activity should develop, so that they may be the "*ferment*" of a better world. The morning meditation has awakened a restlessness in the Cursillista to do something. This rollo invites and encourages us to transform our environments, stressing that we are not to run away from the problems of the world, but to bring a Christian influence to that world. We must begin first with *ourselves*, then reach out to others, and thereby influence our environments. This approach is practical, attainable, and very much a Christian approach, giving backbone to Christianity. This rollo explains how to influence our environments in order to make a difference. The rollista defines the concept of environment; "the result of people gathering together, whether at work, school, recreation, or just talking together." The environment is what results from this interaction of persons. The Cursillista must work with individual persons, but also be aware of the situation as a whole. The "Environments" talk proposes a practical method to win the environment (person) and bring them to Christ. There are three steps: First; *ourselves*- we must strengthen and convince ourselves that Christ is the answer. Second; *others*- whether they are acquaintances, associates, or casual

friends; in the process of getting to know them, we must treat them with dignity, respect, and as the persons that they are. Third; *the environment*- those who surround us where we exist, in our square meter. This rollo helps the Cursillista understand that even before the Cursillo, their lives were made up of one or more groups of people who coexisted together and held similar ideas, likes and dislikes, and experienced a common restlessness and that when they return from the Weekend, nothing will have changed in their environments. The consequence of the Cursillistas' response to Christ will be a natural reaching out to the person(s) to introduce them to Christ through a personal witness of living what is fundamental for being Christian.

Our next rollo, *Life In Grace*, is proclaimed by one of our spiritual directors, clergy or religious. Life in grace calls us to live out the Christian ideal. Grace opens us up to an encounter with God where we can become converted to new life. God invites us into a new and living relationship. We are free to accept or reject this invitation. God loves us so much that he respects our choices through the gift of free will. When we do accept the call, God begins a progressive transformation of our lives. This progressive conversion involves our whole self and our relationships.

The Christian ideal is rooted in God and empowered by grace. This invitation to relationship with Him is pure gift; we cannot and do not earn it. Accepting God's offer of relationship begins a living encounter with God. This living encounter is life-giving and soul-filling. We receive abundant life, with the potential of its deepest, most complete fulfillment. Thus, we become a new creation, a human being, able to live as the image of God we were intended to be at birth. Each person responds individually to this transformation; this progressive conversion is lifelong, coming to rely on God's grace more and more in all circumstances of life. The challenge of this conversion is to live a life of grace, a life that God's grace makes possible.

Regarding our own conversion, this life in grace involves the whole person-our intellect, emotions, and will. This conversion is "metanoia", a fundamental reorientation of life to God in heart, mind, soul, and strength. It is logical that our

relationships are affected by this new life in grace; our families, friends, work relationships, anyone in our square meter. Our clergy or religious rollista will sprinkle meaningful scripture passages to bring this message of life in grace alive to the participants. There may be points relayed from earlier talks that tie into this message, as well as observations that the spiritual director made on the weekend that are relevant to the core ideas of life in grace.

The next activity involves a personal commitment by the participant, in the form of a service sheet. Each participant prayerfully considers what personal commitments they want to make to Christ. It may be anything that enhances the piety, study, or action of the individual, with a plan to go onward after the weekend. These personal commitments are presented during the Offertory at Mass later in the afternoon.

The next rollo is entitled "Christianity in Action." The task of the lay person giving this talk is to provide a living testimony that it is possible today to live as a Christian, unrestrained by societal influences, to help bring about conversion and salvation and to renew the face of the earth. The rollista proclaims the joy in living out the Christian truths and realities in his or her own life. The Cursillista shares how they penetrate their environments in a natural way, living every day with the hope and power that they have encountered in their progressive conversion. This may serve to dispel any fears that some may still have about becoming apostolic in their actions.

The message portrayed in this talk is very clear that in order to be effective in our efforts to spread the Gospel, we need the support provided by continuing contact with like-minded individuals in friendship groups. The life of the Cursillista that is translated into this talk is the irrefutable proof of the constant mystery of the Grace of God and the living reality of "Christianity in Action." The witness is shared as a joyful testimony of life shared as part of a nucleus of Christians, living in grace, who are friends on the journey with each other, creating a climate that makes it possible to spread the Gospel in the world.

The coordinator then speaks briefly about the so called "sermon on the amount", that is, the suggested donation to offset the cost of the weekend. The

coordinator presents this brief request as a free will offering, with no pressure on the participants. The participants may want to know what expenses that are incurred on the weekend, and that our Cursillo community has no fundraising other than this collection. It may be helpful to state that the team also contributes toward the costs of the weekend. Envelopes should be provided for those who may need to mail a check after the conclusion of the weekend.

This leads into the final meal as a small Christian community. Let me speak briefly about the power of the service of the “cha” team. Our new brothers and sisters have observed the silent and prayerful spirit of service from our team members in the kitchen. Their service spills out of the kitchen to the dining room at each meal, attentive to the needs of all present. They are real life examples of Christianity in action. They have shared themselves with us. What greater gift is there? They have also shared messages of palanca from our Cursillo community, from those who lovingly and prayerfully prepared and delivered meals to the retreat center. It is especially poignant to know that small friendship groups have gathered in their homes to create food for our journey.

The next to last rollo is entitled “Cursillista Beyond the Cursillo.” This witness talk, given by a lay person, convinces the participants that what they have experienced and felt these past three days is real and that it can be lived. The message is that to live with Christ in the world is not to lose anything, but to increase the value of one’s own life. The Cursillista evangelizes his/her environments by encouraging others and infusing new life. Their actions are supported by their piety and study, and are guided through the method of the Cursillo. This witness talk is a bridge between Christianity in Action and Total Security, in that one of the primary purposes is to invite the listener to make the message concrete in their minds and hearts.

The rollista reminds our new brothers and sisters that they did not just come to the Cursillo for themselves, that they have changed, but their environments are the same as when they left for the weekend. They have a mission to lead others to Christ, to bring others to Christ. This rollo communicates the response to this mission. Our founder, Eduardo Bonnín, focused on possibility vs. responsibility.

While someone may feel a sense of obligation with the term responsibility, Eduardo preferred to stress that possibility is the capacity to do something about this mission response. It gives the Cursillista more freedom in choosing how to respond to Christ's call to evangelize to others. When someone discovers their possibilities, they assume their responsibilities.

This rollo points to two possible dangers that the candidates may encounter when they return to their environments. The first is a lack of humility, thinking that we are important and indispensable just because we attended a Cursillo. The second is a lack of confidence, believing that we cannot do anything to effect a change in our environments. With Christ, all things are possible; yes, Christ and I are an overwhelming majority.

The Cursillista Beyond the Cursillo talk gives hope that we, as Cursillistas, have found a method to continue what was experienced in the Cursillo, and not only maintain it, but to have it grow. It bridges the gap between the personal experience of encountering self and Christ and the social aspect of Cursillo, the encounter with others. The Cursillista is an active apostle, someone who works in a dedicated way for Christ. The Cursillista is a witness of Christ, one who has Christ within and brings Christ to their environments of family, workplace, neighborhood, social, anyone in their square meter.

The new Cursillista must avoid a tendency to think that everyone should do the same thing that they did. Their apostolic action is carried out in different ways, according to their potential and changing circumstances. All have a common purpose, however, to build up the Kingdom of God through evangelization. The Cursillista must aspire to live in Grace in the normality of life. We are not asking people to give up their previous life and relationships. On the contrary, we encourage them to bloom where they are planted. What should distinguish the new Cursillista is their love of Christ and the joy and optimism that comes from knowing Him. This is where they are being called to live their life in Grace.

The Cursillista should be like leaven in dough, giving life to the environments in which they live. It is spread naturally through the sharing of our piety, study,

and action, increasing their life in Grace and their awareness of it through Group Reunion and Ultreya. In this way, life may be lived as a perennial Cursillo.

Don't pack your bags, yet, folks. We are about to hear a critical talk that speaks to the importance of Group Reunion and Ultreya. It is entitled "Total Security", a rather daunting title for our last rollo on the Cursillo. I recall some years ago that I was the first rollista to give the newest version of this talk. When I learned that I was to witness to "Total Security", I felt very insecure of proclaiming such a message. Of course, it wasn't about my perceived holiness, but that the Cursillo method of sharing our piety, study, and action in small friendship groups and at monthly Ultreyas is the bridge from the Cursillo to the Post Cursillo. If we want to guarantee to keep the treasure that we found at the Cursillo, we must embrace a life of Grace in our 4th day. That is, Grace that is conscious, growing, and shared in friendship and in unity with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

In the Group Reunion, friendship is elevated to the level of transcendent. We begin the Group Reunion by praying to the Holy Spirit to join us in sharing our successes and failures in our evangelization efforts. The presence of the Holy Spirit marks a seriousness and a boldness on our part to share openly with each other in confidentiality regarding our tripod of piety, study, and action. Total Security is presented as something that is a benefit to us, not just another series of meetings or commitments. If our new brother or sister has a desire to continue in his/her 4th day in using the Cursillo method, then they will desire to participate in Group Reunion and Ultreya. The rollista explains and witnesses to how the two methods of the Post Cursillo fulfill the needs of the apostle.

We find Total Security by coming to understand that God loves us unconditionally. Total Security does not mean that all the worries and problems of life have gone away. It simply means that in finding friendship with Christ, we come to understand how God loves us. It is the Group Reunion and Ultreya that give us support and helps us to continue the process of conversion in which we deepen our friendship with Christ, becoming more and more convinced of God's love, which is where we find Total Security.

The Group Reunion and the Ultreya must both be lived if maximum growth is to be achieved. Either one by itself may lead to disillusionment and discouragement, or a stoppage of personal growth. The Group Reunion is for the spiritual growth of the individual person and those in the group. The Ultreya is for the spiritual benefit of the Cursillo community.

We now invite those at the tables to join in a group reunion. The table leaders guide the candidates through their first grouping experience using the grouping sheet. Since the candidates have shared in table discussions after the previous rollos for the past three days, the initial grouping experience should be a natural extension of sharing their piety, study, and action. The coordinator then asks the new Cursillistas to reflect on two questions: "What do these three days mean to me?" and "What do I hope to do as a result of this experience?" The coordinator will explain to the participants that the larger community has been invited to a Closing of the weekend, where they will have an opportunity to briefly share their answers to those two questions with the Cursillo community. The candidates are given the specific logistics of the chapel or area where the Closing will be held. They are also invited to a reunion of the weekend, where they may share again with those that they have shared with the past three days. The coordinator will lovingly invite our new brothers and sisters to publically share with the community; if someone chooses not to share, they shall not be forced to do so. The entire team and candidates head to the chapel for the Sunday Mass and the cross ceremony where they will be told that "Christ Is Counting On You." They are encouraged to respond "And I On Him."

At the closing, a brief 4th day witness is proclaimed by a Cursillista from the community, and the Lay and Spiritual Directors welcome to new brothers and sisters to our diocesan Cursillo community.

Okay, I give you permission now to pack your bags and load your cars. Oh, and don't forget to bring home your dirty underwear.

Pat Gorman- Lay Director- March 2016- School of Leaders

