

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT, FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY: THE CHARISM OF FRIENDSHIP**

*Source: National Cursillo Center Mailing – October 2004*

Who am I? What am I doing here? What is my purpose in this world? I'm sure that these questions occasionally come to mind and perhaps more frequently as we become older or experience some crisis or major event in our lives. Sadly we often discover that what we thought was once important or life lived to its fullest was really just purposeless existence. If this is the case, how can we find the real answers to these questions? In other words, what can we do to live the true, purposeful, and holy life we were created for?

As we enter the 2005 fiscal year of the National Cursillo® Movement, we find ourselves blessed to a life of pilgrimage towards our heavenly Father. A journey which consists of living daily a life of service to others who are each discovering, in their own way, the wonder of God's unconditional love. Because this is a journey, with constant changes and turns, we need to continually apprise ourselves of what our purpose is within the Cursillos in Christianity. We need to continually ask ourselves why we are here and why are we doing what we are doing. We need to be absolutely and positively clear about our purpose because it is our purpose which gives meaning to our identity. Our true identity as the *imago Dei*, the image of God, gives us the courage of our convictions to fulfill our mission as Christ's Mystical Body on earth.

Many people struggle with this whole issue of identity. They continually ask themselves such questions as: Who am I? Do I matter? What is my purpose in life? These questions are important, not only to those struggling with issues of personal and spiritual identity, but to all of us. The answers to these questions can best be discovered through an intimate relationship with God, with oneself, and with others. It is through these relationships that we are led by prayerful discernment to find our true path, our real mission in life, which is the Will of God. Knowing and conceding to the will of God, we discover our true identity. Once we discover our true identity as Children of God, our life changes. God's abundant blessings are seen and experienced by others through our changed attitude and actions towards our sisters and brothers. We are motivated to cease doing even those things that we once enjoyed doing, simply because we find that they are not in God's will. This is not to say that we will become perfect and that we will lead perfect, sinless lives. The reality is that we are still capable of being distracted and forgetting to do what is essential to God's purpose and drift off towards the non-essential. At times we may get completely off track and before you know it we are again doing those things which have no purpose. We must surrender our minds, our bodies and our wills to God on a daily basis, and the best way to surrender oneself is by developing and living an intimate relationship of friendship with the visible manifestation of God's love, His son Jesus Christ.

We may play different roles at different times in our lives, but our true purpose, the essence of our being, never changes. Our true purpose in life is greater and more important than any role we may play. The uniqueness and singularity of purpose is

reflected in the way that God took his time, even before the world was formed, to carefully and perfectly create each and every one of us to fulfill a specific purpose in His Divine Plan. It is also reflected in the unique way God made us to serve Him and His people. Therefore, we must work to discern our role in God's Plan and to center our life in God's Will. We are called to this truth, to live a life of conviction in Christ; a life accomplished through God's Grace, living our holiness throughout our piety life, which is to continuously discover God's love. We are called to live a continuous relationship with Jesus Christ, discovering God's love for us and our brothers and sisters as the only authentic peace that we can experience in our fourth day.

This relationship with Jesus Christ will make us true disciples of Him. Not only in what we do but also in who we are – The Children of God – Sisters and Brothers of Christ – and Temples of the Holy Spirit. It takes a lifetime to build this intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, oneself and others, so we must not get discouraged and give up when we stumble and fall. As Saint Paul reminded Timothy, *“Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”* 1 Timothy 4:16.

The important question for us to ask is this: What form will my service to God and my sisters and brothers take in the Mystical Body of Christ? This is why it is so important for us to know ourselves well so that we may discover our spiritual gifts, abilities and possibilities so as to make a difference in God's plan for the salvation of humanity. Since we are created to serve others, we have to make concrete decisions continually in order to know how we can best serve others with our God-given talents and potentials. Jesus told us: *“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.”* Saint John 15:16.

Our mission in the world, therefore, includes our conviction to Christ and our daily decision to share the Good News that God loves us. The best way to share this great news is through practicing the charism of friendship in our daily activities, in the precise time and place in which we find ourselves. It is through the charism of friendship that we will demonstrate to others our conviction to Jesus Christ. If we practice this special charism, this unique and all-embracing love of God, in all aspects of our life, family, workplace, parish, recreation etc., we will bloom where God has planted us.

Our life purpose should be to live what is fundamental to being Christian. Our lives should embrace all three phases of our interior tripod of piety, study and action, which reflects our three relationships with God, with ourselves, and with others.

We should be open to help each other through our friendship in order to be where we ought to be. As a broken humanity, we are constantly in search for God's mercy and healing. In our hearts we know that He is there, waiting to receive us and embrace us as His prodigal daughters and sons. Keep in mind that it was God who first sought us out in order for us to enter into this intimate relationship with Him. Let us therefore open our hearts, minds, spirits, and souls to seek God's mercy and grace in order for us to give to

our brothers and sisters what we have received from God through His son Jesus Christ: total love achieved through our surrendering to God's Will.

Leaders of the Cursillo Movement should therefore be persons on a continual journey of self-surrendering and willingness to serve the people of God. They should be a people who are constantly improving in their faith and personal lives and not allowing the accidentals to get in the way of the Foundational Charisma of the Cursillos in Christianity in order to serve the people of God through the Gospel's common sense. A people who take the Good News that God loves us to others using the best method known for encountering the nonbeliever: friendship; the charism of friendship that is discovered daily in our encounters with God, self and others.

It is through this charism of friendship that the Grace of God and the love of Christ for His Church enable us to have a conviction to the Gospel and to make concrete decisions in our daily encounters in order to love our sisters and brothers. It is this charism of friendship that enables us to not only reach out to those whom we seek to have a relationship with but to all persons whom God has placed in our path. It is this charism of friendship that makes it possible for us to live what is fundamental to being a Christian so that we may announce the Good News to every one we meet that God loves them!

We strive for a better understanding of the 3-Day Cursillo so that our decisions may not get in the way of the three essential encounters to our brothers and sisters who are being introduced in a short course to what is fundamental for being a Christian.

We must continue to better our understanding of the Ultreya where the joy of God's love is visible and the world can see that we are Christ's disciples by the way we love each other, by the way we allow each other to share his/her experiences in their daily encounters with God, self and others.

**ULTREYA!**