

FRIENDSHIP IN THE CURSILLO WEEKEND

Source: National Cursillo Center Mailing – June 2013

The Mentality of the Cursillo Movement, as expressed by Eduardo consists of: *proclaiming the best news of the best reality that God, in Jesus Christ, loves us; communicated by the best means which is friendship towards the best of each one, that is, the person and his capacity of conviction, decision and constancy* (Leaders' Manual, Ch. 2).

In our last Newsletter, we read how friendship approaches the conversion of the person in three distinct phases, which we call Precursillo, Cursillo, and Postcursillo. In that newsletter, we talked about how in the Precursillo phase, the methodology of the Foundational Charism tries to identify, befriend, and then help the person who is searching for something that he identifies as his happiness or his fulfillment, or his ideal. We know it is really somebody – Christ! And in doing so, the person broadens and accelerates his search and directs it towards the three essential encounters. Therefore, let's talk about how the process continues in the second phase of the Foundational Charism's methodology – the Cursillo Weekend.

“The Cursillo Weekend is above all a living experience of what is fundamental for being a Christian” (Structure of Ideas). The friendship and love of God in Jesus Christ is the center of what is fundamental for being Christian and, in the Cursillo Weekend, friendship continues to be the best method to transmit His friendship and love to all the new Cursillistas.

To experience the process in the second phase of the Method, the Cursillo Weekend, we first need to reflect on how friendship, prayer and sacrifice affect its apostolic success. We also need to reflect on how friendship affects the team serving the Cursillo Weekend, their spirituality and loyalty to the Foundational Charism of Cursillos in Christianity. And lastly, but with the same importance, how friendship facilitates the process to resolve the logistics of the Cursillo Weekend, that is, the material needs and the follow-up to the needs of the new Cursillistas after the Weekend.

We also need to remember that we already have a National Leaders Manual and a Cursillo Manual, which outline the details of the entire Weekend, so we really don't have to explore it further. As Cursillo Leaders, we just need to be aware that the needs and resources are different for each diocese and we need to use our God given Common Sense to be flexible and adjust to each reality as long as we remain within the Charism of Cursillo and the schedule of the Weekend.

First and foremost, we need to understand that absolutely nothing happens in total effectiveness, without Palanca, without prayers and sacrifices from many different people. So as soon as the “Next Cursillo Weekend” is mentioned, from our established friendship with many different people, we should immediately start asking for prayers and sacrifices for the apostolic success of the Weekend. The more true friends we have, the more sincere and authentic palancas will be offered.

Second, a team needs to be selected. The current Cursillo Manual offers three options for team selection. Any of these options are acceptable as long as the final approval comes from the Diocesan Secretariat. In the selection of the team, true friendship is a criterion that is used. And if true friendship exists, we will already know the people that we select. We know their talents and their knowledge of the Foundational Charism, their possibilities and limitations. We will know how they will possibly complement the composition of the team in order to respond to the diversity of personalities amongst the new Cursillistas.

The team should also be aware that if we are to continue, and more importantly, to intensify the friendship that was started in the Precursillo, we need to prepare ourselves intellectually in regards to the Foundational Charism during the School of Leaders' sessions and spiritually during the retreats. A team member cannot truly or effectively give what he doesn't have. The Foundational Charism of Cursillo already has everything that it needs and the team members do not need to worry about adding non-essential elements and/or inventing anything to enhance the work of the Holy Spirit. If we maintain the simplicity of the Cursillo Weekend, the end result will be a more effective and grace-filled Weekend.

We cannot forget that the team members are not the ones that initiate the candidate's conversion; they are only the instruments in the hands of the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit that initiates the conversion and it happens according to the disposition and free will of each candidate. Eduardo Bonnín always said that everything in the Cursillo Weekend has already been developed and that we only needed to keep it simple, natural, normal and always within the truth. He also said that there was no need in Cursillo for any type of coercion or manipulation. The freedom, dignity and respect for every person must always be honored.

The Foundational Charism is Kerygmatic and is jubilantly proclaimed, not so much by the preaching, but by the living witness of the leaders. All 15 rollos of the Cursillo Weekend have two distinctive parts; the message of the rollo and the life of the Rollista. All the Team members, Lay and Clergy, need to know, believe and live what they proclaim.

The team members should also be aware of their talents, possibilities and limitations, so that in true friendship, they will help one another during team formation and therefore, give witness to "Christianity in Action" and fidelity to the Foundational Charism. And most of all, leaders pray together, study together and prepare together, in a way that the team grows spiritually and gives witness to the unconditional friendship that was introduced in the Precursillo phase of the Cursillo Methodology. This unconditional friendship continues in the Cursillo Weekend phase from the first moment when the team members meet the candidates. From the first moment the team members start the "sounding" technique, which is nothing more than "*the only basis on which one can build sincerity without friction and friendship without conventionality*" (Structure of Ideas).

Through this unconditional friendship process in the Cursillo Weekend phase and with the grace of God, the candidates, motivated by so many prayers and sacrifices, are shown the possibility to live a different life, to find their value as persons, to find the love and friendship of God in Jesus Christ and to discover the other brothers and sisters who are also trying to live and share what is fundamental to being a Christian. And in so doing, they form the new mentality that will help them obtain a new and more powerful meaning to their life.

Next, there is the effect of friendship in the process for the logistics for the Cursillo Weekend. The Team members or a Committee assigned to this responsibility, need to work on the logistics of the Cursillo Weekend location, facility, meals, materials, etc. They will accomplish this important task in true friendship and teamwork. When serving with this mentality, they will have an opportunity to pray and work together; with the grace of God, their responsibility to organize the Cursillo Weekend becomes a much easier task.

Finally, but with the same level of importance, the friendship of the Team members with the new Cursillistas after the Cursillo Weekend should continue after the Cursillo Weekend. All the new Cursillistas need to confirm that, in their Fourth Day everything they have been told and experienced since their first encounter in the Precursillo phase must be true, and that the Cursillo team members are living what is fundamental to being Christian just as they proclaimed during the Weekend.

In closing, let us reflect on this quote by our founder: “We need to be faithful to the Gospel, attentive to the Person and open to the reality in which we live” – Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló.

De Colores!