

FRIENDSHIP GROUP REUNION (Permanent, Normal, Natural, etc.)

Source: National Cursillo Center Mailing – April 2009

“I can’t explain in words what I feel...” Surely we have heard this statement at a Closing.

Being an essential piece of our Cursillo Movement, there is always a lot that can be said when we speak about the Group Reunion. It is wonderful that we have so much good literature in all aspects of the subject; therefore, I would limit myself to emphasize about its importance and what can be accomplished when it is an authentic one.

Eduardo Bonnín in his booklet titled *Manifesto*, shares the following witness of a man to his Bishop at the end of a Closing: “You do not know nor understand what I feel right now, having had an encounter with Christ. You have always had Him; I hadn’t. Therefore, I can barely relay to you what is happening to me. How should I say it? It is like a blind man who was able to see for the first time a bright night full of stars; the smile of his child, and the face of his mother.” It was the explosive grace of the last day of a Cursillo Weekend, when the life of all is made into singing, and the singing is made into the life of all.

Service Sheet – Piety, Study, and Action

This same grace which give us back our eye sight and allows us to see Jesus and to follow Him (Mk 10:52), is the same grace that we need to secure through our known perseverance means, in order to make it perennial in our life. This is the principal importance of the Service Sheet: For this, and no other is the true meaning of the “Service Sheet,” that of feeling ourselves, in spite of our deficiency insufficiency in all things divine, active and functioning members of the Church, which together with our concrete and defined dose of piety, study and action can make us permanently and visibly the luminous wake of the Lord’s life in the humanity of today, in a vital and decisive link with all the rest. (Structure of Ideas –Page #94)

Our Life in grace – should be made conscious by our study – a progressive knowing of Christ; it should grow by our Piety; and it should be communicated to others by our action- the insertion of our Christian life into the structures –our witness- in an authentic Group Reunion – an essential piece in our Cursillo Movement. The purpose of the Group Reunion is not to do something, but to be better friends and better Christians. *“In any Christian group, relationships must be formed on a person-to-person basis, and not on the basis of some task to be done together.”* (FI #487)

Many times, the message projected to the Cursillistas during our three day weekend is to “doing” an apostolate and to formulate commitments within a group or an association. The Service Sheet may also be confused to the same mentality. When in reality its content, should be made, adjusted, and adapted to the day and the particular concrete circumstance of my life, constituting an integral part of my Christian life, therefore facilitating the living of the life in grace. The footnote #21 in the recent edition of

Structure of Ideas indicates the following: *“Let us remember that the “Service Sheet” covers a three fold leaflet, and lamentably it is custom to insist more on piety than on study and action. It is also custom to be utilized, not so the Cursillista concretizes his illusion, but for him or her to formulate secondary commitments attending to acts or affiliation to organizations; commitments which should never be formulated in the three days, nor in a posterior period not sufficient. That is to say, before he himself discovers his place, which in the immense majority – since we are talking of layperson – would simply, be his family, his job, his friends, and his previous likings.”*

Friendship – Fundamental Part of the Group Reunion

In our previous mailing (February 2009) we shared an excellent article with a lot of information about friendship. Friendship is fundamental to the Group Reunion. *“The Group Reunion promotes living the Christian life in friendship with others... The Cursillo Movement is interested in creating or forming friendship groups by way of these reunions, so as to perpetuate the Cursillo weekend, to make it a permanent experience to live out, and to live out together, what is fundamental for being a Christian.”* (FI #472)

The Fundamental Ideas of our Movement states that, *“In friendship everything can be shared: all that one is, all that one does, and all that one has.”* (FI #488) Father Hermógenes Castaño from Venezuela, in his rollo *Núcleos de Comunidad* (Nucleus of Community) from the book titled *54 Temas sobre el Movimiento de Cursillos de Cristiandad* (54 Themes about the CM -Coordinated by Rev. Cesáreo Gil) states that *“friendship demands a free, joyfully and loving donation and acceptance of that of what one is, all that one does, and all that one has. The first step in friendship is to give the other person our deeds, only and always when such operation is the realization of its own personality. The second step is to give to the other person what one has; our external wealth to the proper individuality and our integral wealth of our own being. The third step, the one which really constitute an authentic friendship, is that of giving oneself – what one really is- to the other, the reality of its own person, (Christ called them friends, because to them, of many other of His contemporary time, only to them He has trusted with the secrets of His life; “what He has heard from His Father” (Jn 15, 15).*

“Living, Is To Share What It Is Live”

“Everything which is lived as a Christian should be lived together. The Group Reunion is only a means for living together the Christianity that each one lives or seeks to live.” (Structure of Ideas – Page #110). *“All of life is a living together; if it is not lived together, it is not life”* (FI #470). By living a conscious, growing, and shared life of grace, *“the Group is both intimate and open, personal and ecclesial, receptor and transmitter of Christian life.”* (FI #488) By living and sharing what is fundamental for being Christian, they regenerate and perfect the Christian life of each member, therefore perfecting their conversion – growing conversion- or helping in a re-conversion. Therefore, *“the Group Reunion is vital to this growth process. It is a group of people who commit themselves to one another so that together they can be transformed in Christ.”* (FI #472)

The Group Reunion incites us to deepen, to make conscious the Christianity lived sincerely, and to reflect on the reasons of our surrender. Then, this Christian living must become a Christian sharing, spirituality of a member who is convinced of being part of the “Body”; it is a responsible action of the dogma of the Communion of Saints. With the living and sharing, the group retransmit, not only their Christian life, but all the Christian values that within it brings about.

Such groups, by transmitting their Christian life, give origin to new Christian nucleus which, also, will originate others. In fact our actual Cursillo Movement, proclaimed by Pope Paul VI as one *“now able to circulate freely through the streets of the global village with, as it were, proof of citizenship”*, owes its origin to nucleus of this type: *“A core group of people shared one same mentality, which, translated into life, began a movement. Little by little, this movement tried to order itself (method), to orient itself (purpose), and to define itself (essence); and thus it gave rise to a unique and original contribution towards solution of those problems”* (FI #14)

I remember, when sharing with Eduardo Bonnín about this subject, he used to say to me: *“Jorge, the very first Group Reunion that of –the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is our best witness of Communion.”* And so, looking at it in the same way, Christ also had His small Group Reunion – James, Peter, and John; the Gospel relates to us the many times when He called them apart. Father Hermógenes Castaño, again writes, *“the first nucleus (after Christ’s Resurrection), the Apostles, went on developing other communion groups which, at the same time, developed new groups. The ecclesial community was born from them. ‘We write to you about the Word of life, which has existed from the very beginning. We have heard it, and we have seen it with our eyes; yes we have seen it, and our hands have touched it... what we have seen and heard we announce to you also, so that you will join with us in the fellowship that we have with the Father and with the Son Jesus Christ.’”* (1 Jn 1, 1-3)

The Sharing of the Group

The standard level of the group is guided by the *closest moment with Christ* –what one is. Any moment far away from Satan, it is close to Christ... We share our love of God and of our neighbor. We share our love of God by sharing our acts of piety and any other normal act of our life –because anything that we do while living our life in grace increases our grace.

Our love of our neighbor takes shape by bringing others close to Christ. But, how? It is a pity, when you hear as action a long list of the person’s “doing”. Others do not share anything, because perhaps they did not have the opportunity of “doing things” (whether at home, with their kids or their grandchildren at the park, etc.), or of doing “Christian things” (to attend a meeting of a group at their Parish, to serve as a lector, etc.); for them it is like not having any action on that particular week. Perhaps they have forgotten that their action must be a “being”, before it becomes a “doing”. It needs to start with “ourselves” –we need to become the Good News, so that way all our actions may be

evangelistic; this is our action. If we can't make visible the Christ that lives in us, we may never be able to convince any one. It is true that in our action we share what one does, but in the sense of "*And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us.*" (Gen 1:26). In other words, how have we contributed so that those surrounding us in our lives will be like Him and resemble Him. What one has, is the How. The giving of oneself, to serve, to love one another... As St. Augustine said – "*Love and do what you like*"-, because the best sign of love to our neighbors is to seek their life of Grace and their salvation. The question God is often asking us is, "where is your brother...?" (Gen 4:9). Through love let us go into their search; not looking for the easiest nor the hardest way, but the most logical and effective way –in our own daily environments.

I would like to conclude with a quote from the *Fundamental Ideas* of our Cursillo Movement, article #485, taken from the book *Group Reunion – Theory of its Practice*, by Rev. Juan Capo) "*The Group Reunion is not an extra event, but rather a form of life itself; it is not an added obligation one takes on, but rather a help toward perseverance; it is not a mere method, but rather a tangible realization of the dogma of the Communion of Saints. It would be very difficult to find reasons to justify missing a meeting, especially if one understands that the most important function of the Group Reunion is to give a spiritual dimension to everything in one's life - which should, after all, be one's first priority and greatest joy.*"

De Colores...