

THE ULTREYA AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE PERSON

Source: National Cursillo Center Mailing – February 2012

As we know the word *Ultreya* signifies “onward” or “proceed further on”. It was a shout of enthusiasm by the youth pilgrimage to the Shrine of Saint James of Compostela. We do not want to emphasize the definition of *Ultreya* but rather clarify “the living part” of *Ultreya*.

On various occasions we have been asked by several dioceses at what point or stage of the *Ultreya* should the sharing take place. Many times we were confused by this question but after further reflection, we realize that what they were referring to were the events after the *Ultreya* – for example the coffee, donuts, socializing etc.

The *Ultreya* in its totality is the sharing of our Christian life. The dictionary tells us that sharing is good harmony between the persons that share. It also tells us that sharing is living in the company of another or others in good harmony. The word harmony generally applied to music as the art of combining sounds for musical accords. This does not mean that the *Ultreya* is measured according to the music or songs that are shared there, not at all. In fact the music and the songs enhance the climate of the environment. At the end of this article you will see how this part fits in with all the rest.

What is shared in the Ultraya?

If Christianity is not lived it cannot be shared and if it is not shared it cannot be lived. We share what we live and live what we share. It is sharing in “harmony” our Christian life with one another, which is being in accord with one another in our “Being Christian”. How and what do we share? We share through our living witness of the transparent Christ in our small world – our daily environment – living through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ.

What does it mean to live “Being Christian”?

Our human nature has conditioned us to focus our time in “doing things”, but the incarnation of Christ in our life and in all our actions, walk us to a Christian life. The operative presence of Christ in our life assures our direction in our walk towards the Heavenly Father. Therefore, let us reflect in our examination of conscience on how we react in the different circumstances, situations and experiences that perhaps are not in harmony to our way of life in Christ.

The *Ultreya* is the gathering of the Groups or the Reunion of the Group Reunions. The Groups and their members participate in it for the same reasons they go to the Friendship Group Reunions: to share what everybody and every Group lives. They do not go there to acquire knowledge or to receive instructions. If the purpose of the *Ultreya* were to be an educational or organizational one, it would not have the “universal” aspect that so clearly characterizes and defines it.

When this happens, and despite noble goals and objectives, the focus of the *Ultreya* shifts away from the conversion process in a way almost unnoticed at first by even the faithful

pilgrims, until the entire focus has changed from that of BEING and BECOMING Christian to that of DOING Christian things. It is to prevent this very shift that Ultreya must be faithful to the mission. The whole Movement depends on it being so. Once the Ultreya ceases to be this instrument of conversion and turns into venues for those who believe they know better or believe they are better than the others — they inevitably lose members and end up simply with a place where “the most saintly”, “the most thoughtless”, and those who attended “the most recent” Cursillo, gather.

- Imagine what questions we may ask ourselves if we allow Christ to be transparent within us – in our job, with our supervisor, co-workers, employees, etc. Do we give others the desire to know Christ because of our actions and testimony of our life?
- The same thing happens in our personal living as sons, brothers, friends, neighbors, etc. What magazines and books do I read? Are they what a Christian should read? What radio programs do I listen to and what TV programs do I watch? Are these programs appropriate to what a Christian should listen and watch? In what manner do we contribute to eliminate all that enters our home through the communication media that damages and corrupts our society?

As mentioned before, these are some of the most common circumstances, situations and experiences that may contradict our way of life in Christ. In all of this we are not attempting to see how good we are, but rather to examine if we are truly in disposition to allow Christ to incarnate Himself in us so we may be truly transparent of Christ in our environments.

Let's analyze when we lived our Cursillo Weekend. On Thursday night during the Introduction rollo we were asked to portray three things: enthusiasm, self-giving, and charity (Love). As we portray these three things, all of that “doing” during those three days were converted into a living (“being”) experience of our piety, study, and action. Everyday we started with morning prayers and offerings. Daily we shared a meditation, Mass, food, rollos, and shared at our tables (Group Reunion), songs, rest, and summaries by posters of the rollos of the day (Ultreya). The visits to the Blessed Sacrament (individual and group tables), night prayers, rosary, and examine of conscience helped us to reflect over the events of that day. It was that personal contact with each other, which converted that “doing” into a living and sharing. Then we ended with the Closing – Grand Ultreya – “the encounter” and sharing with the Cursillo community.

Now let's analyze and compare our daily living with our Cursillo Weekend. What is the difference? In reality there is a difference between the “environments” of our Cursillo Weekend and the “environments” of our Postcursillo. In our Cursillo Weekend we were cloistered in a little piece of heaven, while in our Postcursillo the things of the world surround us; the environment is very different. Nevertheless our living and our “sharing” in Postcursillo cannot be different to the sharing in our Cursillo Weekend. Our “sharing” and “living” should not change as we move from one place to another.

If our Cursillo Weekend is transformed into a perennial Cursillo (everlasting – for life), then we will continuously strive to actualize Christ in our life. Being a Christian and our Christian actions go hand in hand; the “action” is a consequence of the “being”. St. Augustine said it very simply: “Love God and do what you please”. It is similar to St. Paul on his way to Damascus - we allow ourselves to be taken down by our Lord and we ask Him, “what should I do Lord?” Because like in the Cursillo, everything we do in life is:

- Through Christ – yes, in our work, in our family, in our social life, in our neighborhood, in our parish community; in other words, in our moveable square meter at this exact moment. We must become conscious that in all that we do it is Christ who does it through us and all is done well. And it is done well because He does it.
- With Christ – because He Himself told us “that without him we cannot do anything” and He does not deceive us – “I am with you always, until the end of the world”. With Him we can overcome everything and we will be transparent of Him.
- In Christ – “It is not me who lives but Christ who lives in me” said St. Paul. Living in His grace with total self-giving and a spirit of charity (living our Cursillo Weekend in our Postcursillo). It is He who lives in us and we who make Him transparent in all of our actions.

This is our apostolate – (apostolic action), this is all our life. This is how we take Christ into our small world (the environments) with all the inconvenience, frustration, setbacks, etc., but also with all the love, joy, freedom, conviction, surrender, etc., that we portray in our being. It is living in grace (Christ’s presence within us) that God’s plan becomes a reality and the actualization of the Gospel in our own existence.

This is what we share and partake in the Ultreya. The Ultreya is sharing and communicating our common faith. It is the life of the Christian in harmony with the life of grace, which enlivens all of our daily life. It is living the same normality that was lived at the Cursillo Weekend, nothing more and nothing less.

Likewise in the circumstances of our own life and our small world this only allows us to gather for a little while because of our busy life. We need to plan the Ultreya for the best sharing possible. The planning is minimum but necessary. We cannot lose sight of the importance that we should give to the “person”. As leaders of the Cursillo Movement we should act and serve in the same manner and spirit as in the Cursillo Weekend. To the point that we would die to self in order for the person to reach a true participation in Christian community, knowing, feeling and being a true member of the mystical body of Christ (The Communion of Saints). Just like the Thursday of our Cursillo, we did not know each other but by Sunday it seemed like we had known each other all our life. Furthermore, we did not want to depart from each other.

The Cursillo leaders are to the Ultreya what the team is to the Cursillo Weekend.

In the Ultreya the leaders are to be concerned for the new Cursillistas with openness in charity; making them feel welcome; being generous by applying the technique of personal contact (interpersonal relationship) to accomplish friendship. Not because of the fact that they have lived their Cursillo are we going to cease the process of friendship with that person. Their process began in Precursillo and the final objective of the Cursillo Weekend does not see the individual as its goal, but rather as a point of departure to living in Christian community. The purpose is to be true friends, grow in friendship together, grow in our Christian life, and at the same time “ferment” our environments with the Good News. We should encourage them by making floating group reunion with them and instill in them the importance of seeking possible Cursillistas to form their own Friendship group reunion – a reunion based on Friendship and permanence (stability). We impose nothing on them and allow them to form the reunion at their own pace.

After the Ultreya, the sharing can continue over some coffee, donuts etc.

Ultreya!