De Colores

Cursillo (pronounced Kur-see-yo) has proved to be a life changing experience for many. For others, it been a refreshing renewal of personal faith and a forging of new relationships.

The chorus of a popular Spanish folk song, De Colores, sung often during a Cursillo weekend, illustrates the Cursillo experience. "*And a love bright with colors has found me with others around me and makes my heart sing"*.

Cursillo is a modern movement. It began in Mallorca, Spain, (ck: ref in bulletin to Majorca may be wrong). Between 1943 - 1947 when a group of Roman Catholic laymen and priests formulated a method by which they hoped to renew the church.

Cursillo means "short course" in learning the teachings of Jesus and in living with other Christians. The first Cursillo in the United States was held in the 1950's.

The program was subsequently adopted by the Lutherans, Episcopal, Methodists, and Presbyterians. It was introduced in the RCA around 1980.

The intent of Cursillo is illustrated in a prayer that is used repeatedly during a Cursillo weekend.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,

And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your spirit and they shall be created.

And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit

Did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant

That by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly

Wise and ever enjoy his consolations.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Cursillo is an instrument of renewal. As is a sort course in Christian living, it provides an opportunity for men and women to experience a loving and sharing Christian community during an intense weekend. Those who attend are encouraged to see their primary purpose in life as becoming more like Jesus so they can become agents of change in society and become confident in reaching out to others about their faith.

The best way to appreciate Cursillo is to review how it is organized in our area of Central Iowa, how a weekend is planned, what happens during the weekend and the results.

THE ORGANIZATION

The RCA Cursillo of Central Iowa grew out of the interest of congregations in the Central Iowa and Pleasant Prairie Classes and, gradually, congregations of other denominations. It is not, however, officially affiliated with the Classes nor is it under their supervision. The guiding body is called a Secretariat. Both laity and clergy serve on it. It has responsibility for the enlisting the key leadership for each Cursillo weekend, identifying sites, providing the necessary equipment and evaluating the results.

The "Key Leadership" (Rectors), in turn, has responsibility for recruiting Conference Room staff (speakers [Rollistas], discussion leaders [auxiliaries]) and Palanca Staff (Rectors for the chapel, kitchen, dining room and clean up).

The Planning

Careful planning begins when the Teams have been established at least six months in advance of a Cursillo weekend. The Teams meet together to sort out and assign specific responsibilities.

The Conference Room Team invites each of the Rollistas to ‘do a practice run’ of their presentation. Suggestions are made for revision and/or improvement. This ensures that Rollos are prepared well in advance of the weekend.

THE EVENT

There is normally a Spring and Fall Cursillo. The format for each weekend remains the same. It is a "proven formula" which works.

The teams arrive at the Conference Center early in order to make all of the necessary arrangements. The Candidates arrive on Thursday evening and are given room assignments. The Cursillo begins with an orientation and continues with worship. The worship concludes with the request that the time until the next morning's chapel be observed as a silent retreat.

The three full days of the weekend include a balance of worship, instruction, discussion and fellowship, the latter around meals and in the closing hours of each evening.

There are fifteen talks, five each day, followed by discussion.

1. Ideal

2. Habitual Grace

3. Laity

4. Actual Grace

5. Piety

6. Study

7. Sacraments

8. Action

9. Obstacles to Grace

10. Leaders

11. Environment

12. Life in Grace

13. Christian Community

14. Perseverance

15. Fourth Day

It is a challenge for the Rollistas to be creative and lively in their presentations and for the Candidates to be alert. The Candidates are divided into table groups and it is amazing to watch the bonding which gradually takes place among the candidates and with their table leaders. It is also amazing to observe the different viewpoints which emerge after each Rolla and how clarity is found as a result of the discussion.

The final Rollo, "Fourth Day" underscores what will take place after the Cursillo weekend has been completed. The weekend is not an end but a beginning. Candidates are encouraged to continue the commitment by getting together with several others to maintain a sense of community to continue learning and to be a source of encouragement to one another.

The entire weekend is undergirded with prayer twenty four hours each day. Concerns submitted by the candidates and team members are given to the Prayer Chapel participants.

There are also special prayer times for the members of the Team. Rollistas are "prayed up" before their presentations and "prayed down" after the presentation. The awesome power of the Holy Spirit is present in every facet of the program.

THE FOURTH DAY

There are periodic reunions called "Ultreyas" which draw together those who have attended Cursillo.

The Cursillo community lives love and this love is infused back into congregations following the weekend experience.

TESTIMONIALS

(See website or create more)

CHALLENGE TO CONGREGATIONS

The purpose of this presentation is to encourage congregations to:

* Publicize Cursillo events
* To set up annual scholarships for candidates;
* Consider a contribution to Cursillo to enable the program to upgrade its portable audio/video and video projection systems.

2006