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SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S MANUAL

**3DAY
CURSILLO**

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SPIRITUAL

DIRECTOR'S

MANUAL

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The Spiritual Director's Manual

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of the
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A NATIONAL ULTREYA PUBLICATION

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A NATIONAL ULTREYA PUBLICATION

PART I
THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR
FOR THE 3 DAY CURSILLO

The Team

All that is done within the three-day cursillo must be normal, and therefore, the leaders must form part of a Christian community, so that their witness will be authentic: even before the cursillo they must be Church, build up the Church, live Church, give a community witness, a witness of unity.

The world which, paradoxically, despite innumerable signs of the denial of God, is nevertheless searching for him in unexpected ways and painfully experiencing the need of him—the world is calling for evangelizers to speak to it of a God whom the evangelists themselves should know and be familiar with as if they could see the invisible. The world calls for and expects from us simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, charity towards all, especially towards the lowly and the poor, obedience and humility, detachment and self-sacrifice. Without this mark of holiness, our word will have difficulty in touching the heart of modern man. It risks being vain and sterile.

The power of evangelization will find itself considerably diminished if those who proclaim the Gospel are divided among themselves in all sorts of ways.

The Lord's spiritual testament tells us that unity among his followers is not only the proof that we are his but also the proof that he is sent by the Father. It is the test of the credibility of Christians and of Christ himself. (EVANGELLI NUNTIANDI 76)

The team is:

The church in miniature which creates through the word and witness an urgency to form community and the desire for self-commitment, thus rendering possible a

living experience of what the Church is. (Leaders Manual)

When we speak of leaders we speak of all who form the team because all are required to give the same living witness, the same commitment, enthusiasm and life.

There are no different categories of leaders, only different functions. The witness value of being a Christian while indispensable in the life of each person, does not reach its full force when restricted to the individual: Christian witness is essentially an ecclesial witness, i.e., a community witness.

Everyone - priest and laity - must be, above all, the living incarnation of the message. Their mission is not so much to expound the truth but to act in such a way that the truth penetrates deeply into consciences and moves the will to action. They have in their hands the technical resources which they must know and handle in relation to the purpose of the cursillo. They all share, in proportion to their specific mission, the responsibility for the proper development of the 3-day cursillo. All must enter the cursillo with the attitude of living it, and not just giving it.

For the Church, the first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given over to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one's neighbor with limitless zeal. As we said recently to a group of lay people, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." Saint Peter expressed this well when he held up the example of a reverent and chaste life that wins over even without a word those who refuse to obey the word. It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus - the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity. (E.N. 41)

There is a unity of mission and diversity of services among the team members. The collaboration among them

must be a clear reflection of the collaboration between the priests and laity in a specific mission of the Church. All coincide in a fundamental point which is characteristic of the Cursillos: joint responsibility. This also requires teamwork and, therefore, a unity of values and will, a common vision of the total panorama of the 3-day cursillo gained by uniting partial visions. It involves co-responsibility in the practical carrying out of the whole plan, and the effective programming of the mission and the particular goals of each one.

The Spiritual Director and the Rector or Coordinator

If the 3-day cursillo is directed by a team who should live and witness to the community spirit, it is incumbent upon the rector or coordinator of the cursillo to be, together with the spiritual director, the one principally responsible for that community. We cannot overstate the fact that it is impossible to work without this spirit, since both the team and the participants themselves demand it.

Because he/she is responsible, he/she should be the first and principal servant of charity and harmony between team members and all participants of the Cursillo.

The coordinator is really the hub of the Cursillo, for all the schematic lines of its external structure come together in him/her.

He/she is not there to rule or to arbitrarily decide what and how others should do, but rather to coordinate the cursillo constantly through normal and proper ways toward its full development.

However, since the spiritual director is responsible for the areas of conscience, doctrine and liturgy, there must be teamwork, dialogue and the spirit of the Group Reunion between himself and the lay leaders.

Spiritual Director's Role

Besides the qualities demanded of the laity, the spiritual director should also possess pastoral balance, faith in his

priestly ministry, witness to unity and have the attitude of living the Cursillo and not just directing it.

He must not forget that the cursillos are a school of Christian spirituality which has an eminently lay emphasis.

Because of his priestly character, the spiritual director has a mission of teaching and a ministry of grace in the cursillo.

It is he who gives the dogmatic foundation of the message, in such a way that the talks given by the laity become a logical consequence of the truth proclaimed by the spiritual director. He should provide a synthesis so profound and simple that a doctrinal structure for making the whole of life Christian and for deriving the principles to solve all problems can be presented.

In his ministerial function he is a preeminent instrument of grace to persons and the one chiefly responsible for opening minds and hearts to grace, by means of the exercise of his sacramental powers.

The basic elements of the priestly ministry are: a) to proclaim the Gospel; b) to preside over the sacraments and the liturgy; and c) to build up and serve the community which in turn serves the world. (Report of the Bishops Ad Hoc Committee for Priestly Life and Ministry, USCC, 1974, p. 25).

This description of the common elements of priestly ministry serves well as the framework for a discussion of the role of the spiritual director in the Cursillo.

1. Teaching Ministry

The Cursillo Movement has the same priority as its patron, St. Paul: *"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel"* (1 Cor. 1:17). It sees its mission primarily within the prophetic dimension of the Church's life, witnessing to the Risen Lord. Moreover, it is a witness that is proclaimed intended to bring about within the person a conversion, initial or progressive.

Obviously the Cursillo Movement concerns itself primarily with a limited part of the Church's total mission - effective proclamation of the gospel. It announces the joyful good news that Jesus has saved us with a view to bringing about *metanoia*. It seeks to lay the essential foundation for a Christian life by calling persons "to faith and to conversion" (Sacrosanctum Concilium No. 9). In other words, it is primarily an instrument of evangelization.

The need for a primary emphasis on evangelization within the Church has been attested to many times in recent years. For example, in 1971 the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy stated regarding the condition of the Church:

Great numbers are drifting little by little into religious indifference, or are continuing in danger of keeping the faith without the dynamism that is necessary, a faith without effective influence on their actual lives. The question now is not one of merely preserving traditional religious customs, but rather one of also fostering an appropriate reevangelization of men, obtaining their reconversion, and giving them a deeper and more mature education in the faith. (General Catechetical Director No. 6).

Very often the actual condition of large numbers of the faithful necessarily demands that some form of evangelization of the baptized precede catechesis. (General Catechetical Director No. 19)

The need to evangelize within the Church is not simply a matter of calling persons to initial faith and conversion. There is a constant need to renew faith with ongoing evangelization.

For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: "Now I am making the whole of creation new." But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived

according to the Gospel. The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the Message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieux which are theirs. (EN 18)

The Cursillo Movement takes a particular approach to evangelization - it seeks to evangelize environments by evangelizing individuals. It seeks to build Christian living into the existing structures (interrelationships of persons) and so penetrate environments (groupings of people) with the gospel. This special emphasis on environments is in line with Pope Paul's teaching on evangelization. He calls upon the Church to evangelize cultures:

What matters is to evangelize man's culture and cultures in the wide and rich sense which these terms have in Gaudium et Spes, always taking the person as one's starting point and always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves with God. (EN 20)

The spiritual directors can understand their role within the cursillo only if they see the whole Cursillo Movement as an instrument of environmental evangelization and see the 3-day cursillo as one phase in the total strategy of the Movement. The four phases of the total strategy for environmental evangelization may be summarized as follows:

Select: selecting persons from certain environments - Pre-cursillo

Form: evangelizing those selected by the proclamation of the gospel-3-day cursillo

Link: uniting those converted in genuine Christian community - Post-cursillo

Enlighten: helping them discover their mission in their environments - Post-cursillo

So the Cursillo has a limited and precise objective - to bring about *metanoia*, awakening or deepening faith. It does so through the effective proclamation of the gospel. The talks and meditations given by the spiritual directors are crucial to the effectiveness of this proclamation. To be effective as a spiritual director in the Cursillo one must be comfortable with the role of evangelizer:

...priests (spiritual directors) as co-workers with their bishops, have, as their primary duty, the proclamation of the gospel of God to all. In this way they fulfill the Lord's command: "Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Thus they establish and build up the People of God. (Presbyterorum Ordinis No. 4)

The methodology for this proclamation is described by Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975). He lists four essential elements:

Witness of Life: "Above all the gospel must be proclaimed by witness." (No. 21). The spiritual directors must bear witness primarily by the life they live in close union with the Lord. They must rejoice in the Good News themselves and be willing to share that joy with others.

Proclamation of the Word: "The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed" (No. 22).

Acceptance: We have not effectively evangelized until the *kerygma* has been accepted by individuals through *metanoia*. This acceptance is complete only when the individual is incorporated into a community of believers. This entry is expressed through many signs, principally the Sacraments. "For in its totality,

evangelization - over and above the preaching of a message - consists in the implantation of the Church, which does not exist without the driving force which is the sacramental life culminating in the Eucharist" (No. 28).

Discipleship: "Finally, the person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others. Here lies the test of truth, the touchstone of evangelization: it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the Kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn" (No. 24). An effective call to apostolic action is integral to evangelization.

The manner in which the spiritual director proclaims the content of the outlines which follow is as important as the content itself. The talks and meditations will have the desired effect only if they are:

- illuminated by the witness of his own communion with God;
- the proclamation of the joyful Good News of salvation;
- oriented toward the formation of genuine Christian community;
- directed toward motivating lay apostles.

The outlines which follow indicate the content considered essential to the effective proclamation of the kerygma in the Cursillo. The spiritual director is responsible for communicating the content but he must adapt the outlines to suit his own manner of teaching and the needs of the particular Cursillo.

The spiritual director should be familiar with *Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement* (Ulreya Publications, 1974) before beginning to prepare a meditation or talk. Many hours should be spent in prayerful reflection on the outlines, so that they become integrated fully into the spiritual director's own life. The final talk or meditation

should be a very personal sharing of the content outlined, as it is experienced by the spiritual director at that time.

The New Testament is the main source for the outlines, since it is the earliest witness we have to the kerygma. Therefore, the spiritual director should teach from the New Testament. It should be evident that the Scriptures are the source and not just supportive evidence. To teach more effectively from the New Testament, each candidate may be given a copy of a good modern translation. (The New American Bible or the Jerusalem Bible are recommended.) The candidates then may be encouraged to follow the speaker in the New Testament and to make significant passages.

2. Liturgical Ministry

Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in her sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper. (Sacrosanctum Concilium No. 10)

The liturgy should be the summit toward which all the activity of the 3-day cursillo is directed and at the same time the principal source of grace. It is especially the responsibility of the spiritual directors to make it so since the Eucharist is an integral part of the life of the Church and therefore of the Cursillo.

The common sharing of what is fundamental for being a Christian is a living experience of the eucharist. That is why the Eucharistic Community is fostered in the 3-day cursillo. Not only is the people of God led and invisibly supported by the Spirit of Christ, but also, according to the will of the Lord, it ought to form a true visible family. It has to bring to life what was experienced in the early Christian community, when all were one in mind and heart. This

demands that, within the Catholic community, small communities gather around the Eucharistic Table, to experience unity and communicate this unity of love.

No Christian community can be built unless the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is its core and root.

In the Cursillo we must place special emphasis on the Eucharistic celebration as a true announcement of the word of God come to life.

Preaching, prayer, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in an almost unsurpassable blend and harmony, bear witness to the manifold experience of the presence of the Lord at the liturgical service of the early Christians. Here too, with an almost incomparable intensity, God is present. The cultic celebration of the Lord's Supper does not lack a clearly kerygmatic orientation (1 Cor. 11:26). Thus the Lord's Supper is a true proclamation of the Word of God. (Mysterium Salutis)

It is logical that the Eucharist should have a high priority at the cursillo since the Eucharist is:

a sacrament of piety, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, an Easter banquet, the source of the life of the Church, which it brings to life and growth, therefore the source and summit of Christian life. (SC 47, LG 11, 26)

The Eucharist must not only be the center of life during the three days of the Cursillo. The entire Cursillo should instill in the participants the awareness that subsequently, in the Fourth Day, the Eucharist must be the center of their total lives, their encounter with the community, and the source of their commitment to action.

It has always been a custom in the Cursillo to celebrate Mass daily. These celebrations are carefully prepared so as to be an intense living experience.

We have all experienced the inner growth of cursillistas at the moment of the Mass when it truly becomes the core and summit of the three-day Cursillo.

Eucharistic worship, centered in the celebration of the Mass, is prolonged during the day through personal and collective contact with Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament: thus the importance of the Visits to the Lord, which intensify with each passing day of the Cursillo. Held within the schedule of the Cursillo they are of an extraordinary ascetic and pedagogical value. These prayerful visits, spontaneous and shared, (in which the problems and climate of the Cursillo are placed before the Lord) promote the common unity of the cursillistas, bring hearts more closely together, and encourage true friendship. With them, the community becomes solidified by sharing, taking as our own one another's problems. Therefore, in these visits, we become aware not only of our closeness to Christ, but also of the community spirit blossoming in the three days and the value of shared prayer.

Penitential Rite

The new rite of Penance allows for a more meaningful celebration either individually or communally. The priest spiritual director ought to use the ritual creatively within the norms of the general instructions and the local ordinary. Since, in terms of the freedom of each individual, it is not advisable to limit the availability of the sacrament to certain times, it might be better for the Penitential Rite to be communally opened on Thursday evening and closed on Sunday before the Eucharistic celebration. This respects the individual's right to receive the Sacrament of Penance anytime during the weekend and not at certain designated celebrations. (See Pilgrim's Guide P. 39)

Para-Liturgies

The spiritual directors should also give guidance in the preparation of the para-liturgies, such as morning and night prayer, Way of the Cross, etc. The new Pilgrim's Guide encourages creativity and flexibility.

Apostolic Commitment Service

It is most appropriate for the bishop to preside, if possible, at the apostolic commitment service since the candidates are committing themselves to be active members of the Church. The spiritual director should indicate this in his remarks prior to the service.

Pilgrim's Guide

In an environment of communal prayer, it is an advantage to have a publication which contains some formulas for communal prayer. The prayer book used on the weekend received the name Pilgrim's Guide from the very beginning of the Movement, because of the characteristic pilgrimage style of the cursillo. With whatever formulas, whatever name, such a book is very useful and effective in the Cursillo and is a definite aid in the daily prayer life of the cursillista afterwards.

The many references to the Pilgrim's Guide in the last talk, *Christian Life*, is so that the new cursillistas may be encouraged to use it afterwards as a daily prayer book and means for meditation and study. Their use of it in the post-cursillo will depend greatly on the encouragement given by the spiritual director during the weekend.

3. Ministry of Service

The Cursillo Movement is a movement of the Church. It requires the gifts and efforts of all the people of God. The spiritual director functions as a member of an apostolic team, making his unique contribution to achieving the common mission. . . . "so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12)

The spiritual director acknowledges and respects the role of the laity. He listens to them and recognizes their competence. He acknowledges their freedom and encourages them to undertake tasks on their own initiative.

A major responsibility of the spiritual director is to form the kind of genuine Christian community, in which the diversity of gifts and functions can flourish. This will be his concern as he participates with the team in Leaders' School prior to the cursillo. It will be his concern as he works with the team and candidates during the Three Days. He will lead in the formation of a community with a missionary thrust.

The office of the pastor is not confined to the care of the faithful as individuals, but is also properly extended to the formation of genuine Christian community. . . . The local community should not only promote the care of its own faithful, but, filled with a missionary zeal, it should also prepare the way to Christ for all men. (Presbyterorum Ordinis No. 6)

The spiritual director should work in close cooperation with the rector in forming this community. His ministry of service should be characterized by his availability to all during the entire Cursillo and his attitude of humble service of the community.

The spiritual director should be committed to the total movement - pre-cursillo through post-cursillo. He helps in the selection and preparation of candidates, he assists in the formation of the team and he assumes responsibility for the perseverance of the cursillistas in the Fourth Day.

Personal Contact

The spiritual director ensures that the proper orientation of the 3-day cursillo towards its spiritual and apostolic goal is both collective and individual. While the main thrust of the former will be the creation and maintenance of a loving climate, the latter will be mainly accomplished by personal contact between the spiritual director and the candidates on an individual basis. The onus for personal contact will be on the spiritual director so that he gets to know each one personally and individually.

For this reason, side-by-side with the collective proclamation of the Gospel, the other form of transmission,

the person-to-person one, remains valid and important. The Lord often used it (for example with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman, Simon the Pharisee), and so did the Apostles. In the long run, is there any other way of handing on the Gospel than by transmitting to another person one's personal experience of faith? It must not happen that the pressing need to proclaim the Good News to the multitudes should cause us to forget this form of proclamation whereby an individual's personal conscience is reached and touched by an entirely unique word that he receives from someone else. We can never sufficiently praise those priests who through the Sacrament of Penance or through pastoral dialogue show their readiness to guide people in the ways of the Gospel, to support them in their efforts, to raise them up if they have fallen, and always to assist them with discernment and availability. (EN 46)

Spiritual Direction

During the 3-days a consciousness of the need for spiritual direction is generated among the participants. The spiritual director provides the opportunity for it at certain times and particularly during the work of personal contact. While spiritual direction is begun during the 3-days, it is with the hope that it will be continued in the Post-cursillo. As with the sacrament of Penance, the availability of the spiritual director at all times is emphasized and the participants encouraged to seek it at any time.

Deacons and Religious as Spiritual Directors

Two or more priests should always serve as spiritual directors in a Cursillo. However, the spiritual direction "team" can include other qualified persons, one as the associate spiritual director, such as deacons and religious brothers and sisters. In fact the inclusion of some spiritual directors other than priests enriches the Cursillo experience for the candidates. The non-priest spiritual directors can and should share in all the usual functions of the spiritual

directors, with the exception of presiding over the sacraments and liturgies. In particular, they should be available with the priests throughout the 3 days for spiritual direction and they should give some of the meditations and talks. Clergy or religious should not give talks or perform duties that are the responsibility of the laity.

In cursillos for women it is especially helpful to have one or more women religious as spiritual directors. Many of the candidates will relate initially more easily to them than to priests.

All spiritual directors should be specially prepared for this ministry by study and by experience. They should be aware of the need to refer the candidates to the priests for the sacrament of Penance.

Cursillos for Women

In Cursillos for women, especially when the meditations or talks are given by women spiritual directors, some special adaptations can be made in the outlines which follow. For example, the story of Osee and Gomer might be used instead of that of the Prodigal Son. In the meditation on the Three Glances of Christ, encounters between Jesus and certain women in the Gospels might be substituted. In all the meditations and talks examples and illustrations which relate better to women should be used.

PART II

THE PURPOSE OF THE TALKS ON THE WEEKEND

Precise Purpose

Capo, Fernandez and Bonnin preface their analysis of the Cursillo method in *The How and the Why* (p. 31) by saying:

"To have a correct standard and to establish a firm basis for judging the Cursillos correctly, it is necessary to determine their precise purpose. The analysis of their purpose might seem superfluous at first glance. Everyone believes that he has understood it. But the facts show, with all too much evidence, that each one has analyzed the Movement in his own fashion.

The book "Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement" states the following: "as a movement of the Church which, with its own method, makes it possible to the what is fundamental for being a Christian, in order to create nuclei of Christians who engage in leavening their environments with the Gospel, helping to discover and achieve their personal vocations, with respect to the same. (i.e. "Structuring Christianity")"

It is within that definition that the outlines of the talks are intended to function in a precise way. From them come the talks to be used in the Cursillo so as to give persons an introduction into a movement which has a definite purpose within the Church. Understanding the outlines to be used in preparing the talks of the Cursillo requires an understanding the purpose of the Cursillo Movement.

The need for a clearer understanding of the purpose of the outlines and therefore of the movement has to be made clear because it is often asked why the outlines contain only what is in them and not other things. Various suggestions have been made for an improvement. Some have suggested a fuller treatment of the social doctrine of the Church. Some

have suggested a fuller or different treatment of the need for charity in personal relationships. Any explanation of the outlines, has to also explain why the Cursillo talks say only what they do.

The Outlines

The purpose of the outlines is not to present a complete introduction to Christianity nor is it a high-level catechism course explaining the Catholic faith for adults. As a general course in Christianity, the Cursillo is very inadequate because it leaves out too much. The Cursillo outlines simply are not attempting to present a summary of Christian doctrine or a complete picture of what it is for a layman to live the Christian life.

Not a Problem Solving Program

First of all, the Cursillo movement does not work directly with the problems of the Church and society, but it works to form a group of persons who can work with them. It offers to the Church persons who will be able to work on a program of Christian renewal. The Cursillo Movement, in short, is designed to form men and women.

As it says in *The Leaders' Manual* (p. 199):

"The Christian renewal of society is the objective but this objective is not sought through direct and global action on the entire mass of Christians, but rather by selecting from among them the ones who, by embodying the requisite conditions, may offer concrete hopes of being, later on, living and enlightening members of the mystical body of Christ in order to give a truly Christian tone to an environment, and to be an example and guide to a world that is profoundly sick." (Pius XIII).

It is for this reason that there is a series of limits on the work of the organizations (the diocesan secretariat, the leaders meeting) which direct the Cursillo Movement:

"They do not promote general campaigns of apostolic action. They do not organize, as such, projects which work to resolve concrete temporal problems. They do not organize cursillistas for these or similar goals. (Questions and Problems, essay 5, conclusion 5).

The Cursillo does not deal with the problems directly, but it has an effect on them through the men it prepares.

Being Christian

Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness.

Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. Here we have an initial act of evangelization. The above questions will perhaps be the first that many non-Christians will ask, whether they are people to whom Christ has never been proclaimed, or baptized people who do not practice, or people who live as nominal Christians but according to principles that are in no way Christian, or people who are seeking, and not without suffering, something or someone whom they sense but cannot name. Other questions will arise, deeper and more demanding ones, questions evoked by this witness which involves presence, sharing, solidarity, and which is an essential element, and generally the first one, in evangelization. (EN 21)

One way of describing the type of help the Cursillo movement is designed to provide is: it is designed to make it possible for him to live what is fundamental for being a Christian (lo fundamental cristiano). This phrase recurs frequently in the Cursillo literature, and it sums up an understanding of the movement.

"The Cursillo, complete and entire, is directed to helping men live what is fundamental for being a Christian (Questions and Problems, essay 5, section 9b).

The Cursillo movement attempts only to make it possible to live what is fundamental for being a Christian. The help the Cursillo provides begins in the Pre-Cursillo and is maintained throughout life by the post-cursillo. In the Cursillo literature, "what is fundamental for being a Christian" is summed up in the phrase "living the life of grace and spreading it" or, in the words "saints and apostles" as descriptions of what the men who make the Cursillo should be, in other words being a Christian.

The Cursillo movement attempts to offer to the Church persons for the work of renewal who are formed in the fundamentals of Christian living, persons who want to be saints and apostles, persons who want with all their hearts to live the life of grace and bring others to live it.

The word "fundamental" was picked for a reason. The literature of the Cursillo does not say that what it provides is all that is needed. It does not say that living in union with Christ and working to bring others to union with Christ is sufficient. But it does say that this is the basis for everything else in the Christian life. Everything else must be built in it or come out of it if it is to be truly Christian. As it says in *Questions and Problems* (essay 5, conclusions 2 and 3):

The Cursillo presents the radical and basic solution of all the problems of the man who seeks his happiness, so that he, with his own responsibility, may make the concrete applications of the gospel in his life.

In the Cursillo, the social, family, economic and political questions and their Christian solutions are not treated directly, but what is treated is what is fundamental for being a Christian, the necessary and radical source of every solution which is human and Christian.

The Church considers it to be undoubtedly important to build up structures which are more human, more just, more respectful of the rights of the person and less oppressive and less enslaving, but she is conscious that the best structures and the most idealized systems soon become inhuman if the inhuman inclinations of the human heart are not made wholesome, if those who live in these structures or who rule them do not undergo a conversion of heart and of outlook. (AN36.)

For instance, the Cursillo outlines do not directly treat family problems or the principles needed for the successful formation of a family. This is because it considers union with Christ and the desire to bring others to Christ the basis for a truly Christian family life. Once the basis is there, the rest can be more easily worked out. Without the basis, the family will never be truly Christian. Experience shows that family life is transformed as a result of the weekend.

Strategy

There is, however, a further dimension to what the Cursillo tries to accomplish. In Bonnin's talk at the International Ultreya in 1966, he gave the following definition of the Cursillo:

"The Cursillos in Christian Living are a method for making it possible for those who have been baptized to live what is fundamental for being a Christian, a method which gives birth to a movement which works toward providing a backbone for Christian life."

The Cursillo does try to make it possible for persons to live what is fundamental for being a Christian, but it also

wants them to be part of a movement which works toward providing a backbone for Christian life. The above description of the purpose of the movement from Questions and Problems is accurate, but it does not bring out fully enough the aspect of the movement which is expressed in the phrase "providing a backbone for Christian life."

"Providing a backbone for Christian life" is a strategy of renewal. It involves a certain approach to living the life of grace and spreading it. The cursillo attempts to form persons in what is fundamental for being a Christian and tries to give them a method which allows them to turn their living of it into an effective means of Christian renewal in the Church and in society. The cursillo forms them as leaders in a movement that tries to renew the world by providing a backbone for Christian life in the world.

Evangelization, as we have said, is a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative. (En 24)

The cursillo weekend only begins the process of helping the men and women who attend to live what is fundamental for being a Christian and to work to provide a backbone for Christian life in the world. The process continues through the group reunion and the ultreya, which are means for maintaining a deeply Christian life and an apostolic orientation, and through other parts of the movement. But on the weekend, the cursillistas do get a start, and the talks have to do their part of the job to make the weekend successful.

Weekend Expectations

Two things have to happen in the weekend. First of all, the participants on the Cursillo are introduced to a living experience of Christian community. As it says in Structure of Ideas (p. 28):

The Cursillo is above all a living experience of what is fundamental for being a Christian.

Encountering Christ and experiencing how others as Christians live life, the participants can begin to live what is fundamental for being a Christian.

Secondly, on the Cursillo weekend, the participants also have to get a vision of what is fundamental for being a Christian (what it is to be a saint) and of what it means to form Christian life in society (what it means to be an apostle). They have to understand what they are committing themselves to. They need to get a vision of what their own lives can be.

New Vision

The new vision of what it means to be a Christian comes in large part through the talks. In the talks, the Cursillo weekend provides a series of presentations which gradually sketch in a picture of the new person which the listener can be. He first of all gets a vision of what it is to be a Christian. Then he gets a vision of what it is to be a Christian leader who works and lives with others in a movement of renewal which provides a backbone for Christian life in the modern world.

The talks in the Cursillo are meant to provide the participant with a vision of the new man he can become. They are not meant to present a series of topics, an orderly catechesis, on Christian living. They therefore leave out many things that are important for Christians to know: many things about doctrine and personal morality and social morality, many things about spiritual life and the apostolate.

But they do present a vision of what is fundamental for being a Christian, and they present it in a way that shows a person how to live what is fundamental for being a Christian in such a way that he can be an effective apostle (a Christian leader) in a movement for the Christian renewal of society.

In order to best understand the above it is necessary to go through all the talks of the weekend considering them (1)

individually with their specific message and (2) as a whole. A good perspective is to view all the talks as one talk divided into fifteen parts. It is also easier and clearer to place the movement and what it is trying to do within the context of evangelization. Two key points need to be kept in mind.

I. The talks have a definite purpose they are not intended to treat all of Christian doctrine. Therefore they should be understood and presented in the light of their purpose and no more, since persons can leave the weekend confused because they have not received a clear integrated message.

II. The talks are meant to present in a progressive way what is fundamental for being a Christian and how to do so with others so that Christianity is built into the world and transforms it.

A cursillo is, in the first place, the exposition of a doctrinal message. It presupposes and demands a doctrinal structure, a solid dogmatic base, which will become the foundation of clear and profound religious conviction. From this will come a solid Christian life imbued with theological truth.

The person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others. Here lies the test of truth, the touchstone of evangelization: it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the Kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn. (EN 24)

Style

The various presentations of the message proclaimed in the cursillo have been called simply talks a word intentionally chosen to avoid the academic terms "lecture" or "lesson". The proclamation of the message should be done without arrogance and false humility (which would not be in the

Gospel spirit), with conviction, simplicity, authenticity, and yet with a certain reserve in doing so before others. The talks are both doctrine and witness.

The *talks* are to be the joyful proclamation, not of what is known merely intellectually, of an academic and sterile truth, but rather of what is lived, of an active, dynamic truth. All the talks, whether given by priests or by laity, should be doctrinal and witnessing, making present that which is proclaimed.

For the Christian community is never closed in upon itself. The intimate life of this community—the life of listening to the Word and the Apostles' teaching, charity lived in a fraternal way, the sharing of bread—this intimate life only acquires its full meaning when it becomes a witness, when it evokes admiration and conversion, and when it becomes the preaching and proclamation of the Good News. Thus it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole. (EN 15)

Although the talks are not everything in the *curso*, they are one of its essential elements: they contain the doctrinal body of the *curso*, which gives the foundation and style of our Christian spirituality; they are the means for the proper, conscious and hopeful attainment of the essential: the living of what is fundamental for being a Christian.

They are all synchronized; each is a necessary part within the make up of the *curso*. The leaders should be familiar with all the talks and have a vision of the total message. They should know the basic message of each outline, and how it makes a specific contribution to the total message. We are not trying to give all of Christian doctrine in each *talk*, but rather to give what is necessary to explain Christian life and how it should be lived.

Since the *curso* is in the kerygmatic tradition, the *talks* will have their own characteristics. They try to present the Gospel to the participants in such a way that they clearly

hear the call to take a new attitude toward their lives. The *talks*, therefore, should be presented in a way that is intimately related to the concrete circumstances in which the *Curso* is being held. In this way, through the drive of authentically lived grace, the elicit a response to the concrete problems of today's world. As many witnesses as possible of communal action, in typically temporal and worldly environments and not only in ecclesial ones, should be included.

Length of the *Curso*, Schedule and Talks

The length of the *curso*, established from the very beginning, is three days. This, as experience has shown, is the sufficient and necessary time to reach the objective that the *curso* attempts to achieve.

The schedule is very important for the attainment of the fruits of the *curso*. People have their physical, emotional and psychological limitations; the choices they make in the *curso* should be free and conscious. For this we have to count on necessary free time and sufficient hours of rest, which will only come if the weekend is not filled to the brim with all sorts of activities and if the talks are not too long. As far as the spiritual director is concerned, the meditations should be ten to twenty minutes in length and the talks not more than one hour each, except for the talk on Sacraments, which should not last longer than one hour and a half.

PART III
THE METHODOLOGY OF THE
TALKS & MEDITATIONS

Considering the progression of the talks in the 3 day cursillo is another valuable way of bringing out the purpose and structure of the cursillo outlines. Actually considering the cursillo talk by talk pins down some of the main ideas to their place in the weekend, and it also shows in a clearer way the actual flow of the weekend. Considering the main ideas by the titles may clarify some of the thinking behind the cursillo, but it obscures the structure of the development of ideas in the cursillo itself.

There are a number of ways of bringing out the progression of the talks of the Cursillo, because they are interrelated in various ways. One obvious division is that of the priests' talks and the lay talks. The priests' talks present the theology of living the life of grace and the lay talks teach the cursillista how to live the life of grace as a layman. There are, in other words, several kinds of interrelationships, each illuminating a different aspect of the progression, but the basic progression is by days. Each day of the Cursillo is a whole and tries to do a different thing. The first day tells the person what he or she has to do, the second tells him or her what he or she has to do, and the third day tells him specifically how the goals established in days one and two can be achieved—contact with Christ and with one's brothers and sisters.

Overall View

Before presenting the characteristics, message and purpose of each talk and mediation, we offer an overall view of them.

We shall follow an order and some themes that have been validated by long experience. Using this model, the cursillo does transmit adequately the message of what is fundamental for being a Christian.

The Cursillo attempts to bring about the initial or deepening conversion of the individual, greater self-knowledge, and the reinsertion of the converted individual into his or her own daily circumstances, working within a group, in order to bring a Christian spirit to society. We are interested in the world, in the "convert" and in the responsible incorporation of the convert in his or her world.

Lay people, whose particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and in charge of the most varied temporal tasks, must for this very reason exercise a very special form of evangelization.

Their primary and immediate task is not to establish and develop the ecclesial community—this is the specific role of the pastors—but to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It also includes other realities which are open to evangelization, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering. (EN 70)

To work towards these goals, we have two preliminary phases: the preparation of the candidate and the proclamation of the message. The 3 day cursillo, therefore is divided into four phases: A) preparation; B) proclamation; C) conversion; D) projection in the world.

These are not rigid and exclusive stages: we distinguish them in order to understand the different moments which should be sought for.

Preparation - comprised of:

1. *The Opening Talk*, which should give the what, why, who, wherefore and how of the cursillo.

2. *The Retreat*

The cursillo begins with what has come to be known as the RETREAT.

The objective of the spiritual retreat is to awaken the moral conscience of the cursillistas, beginning with an analysis of their own lives, and to make them feel the desire for the encounter with God.

It is simple, non-rhetorical call to reflective and sincere authenticity, before the reality of God, Father of the prodigal son, who approaches us. . . and looks at us. The retreat predisposes the interior attitude of the cursillista to accept the message, inspiring a searching attitude, and assisting this restlessness to be healthy, right, sincere, hopeful. At the end of it, the participant begins to feel that life without God does not make sense. His former life seems empty. The Retreat shows the participant that life is a vocation, a future to build.

The logical attitude of persons who discover the emptiness of their life is "I shall arise and go to the house of my Father".

Silence

The silence of the Retreat helps the participants to take hold of themselves, to go inward, to encounter themselves, discovering that the rush of daily activities often impeded their finding themselves and hearing God's voice. Some discover that the rush of activities can be a flight from oneself.

To attempt to achieve the effects of the whole Cursillo on this first night is to risk frustrating it. So it is not a matter of forcing the Truth but making room for it.

a) First Meditation - *Know Yourself* - tries to make the participants aware of who they are, what are their potentialities and limitations.

b) Second Meditation - *The Prodigal Son* - presents the figure of the Father and initiates the participants into the knowledge of Christ, bringing

out the infinite difference between the goodness of the Lord and that of persons.

c) Third Meditation - *The Three Glances* - asks the participants how Christ sees them now. We seek an attitude of openness to the truth which will be proclaimed, by sharing three distinct attitudes.

The Spiritual retreat, which runs from Thursday night through Friday morning, provides a setting for the talks, an introduction. It announces that the cursillo offers an opportunity to discover the answer to all of each man's problems (and, by implication, an answer to all the problems of the world).

It is most important that silence be observed during the retreat phase of the Cursillo. Sufficient time must be given to the candidates so that they can quietly and peacefully reflect and ponder on the truths presented during the meditations."

The First Day Talks - Proclamation of the Message

The five talks of the first day are intended to present what is fundamental for being a Christian.

1. *Ideal* - a call to be a human person.

-2. *Grace* - a call to be a Christian human person. *MB, d'and, etc*

3. *The Lay Person Is the Church in the World* - a call to the Christian to be an active and responsible member of the People of God. *M, Va / G, A, C, L*

-4. *Faith* - To make this triple call fruitful we must unite the free assent of the person with the help of God, which will never fail though it always respects liberty: a call to confidence and responsibility. The emphasis is on Divine aid.

5. *Piety* - the presence of someone who can assure the participants that what has been said is not mere fantasy; the triple call can be lived with the grace of God.

The Second Day - Conversion

The first day has left the participants with a question - how do I become holy, how do I live this life of Grace, how do I make this life with all that is in it, my ideal? The second day is dedicated to showing him how to live what is fundamental for being a Christian, and it does this in a practical way. He or she is told that the solution is first of all by drawing closer to Christ, coming to know Him as a person, and following Him, doing what He commands, being like Him.

1. Fourth Meditation - *The Figure of Christ* - How should we see Christ? As God-Man. The good Christ of the first night is now seen as a Christ who calls to commitment.
2. *Study* - a talk that calls for a change in mentality - Christian truth is given not that we may know it, but that we may live it.
3. *Sacraments* - ^{by means of} they are encounters with Christ in the Church, which made possible the fullness of Christian life.
4. *Action* - the Christian life should be lived and shared. All our powers should be exercised in doing so, under the impulse of Christian love.
5. *Obstacles to a Life of Grace* - the participants are prepared for the difficulties they may find in their Christian life.
6. *Leaders* - how to be an effective Christian leader in the world they are living in.

The Third Day - Insertion

The third day presents the strategy and method of the Cursillo and its approach to the apostolate. What was presented in the first two days, although oriented to making clear the third day, is nothing that is unique to the Cursillo Movement. It is the third day which presents the particular method of the Cursillo, the perseverance program and the strategy.

On the third day, the cursillo opens out to consider society. This is not to say that the rest of the cursillo ignored it completely. But it is to say that it is only during the third

day of the Cursillo that the approach to winning society, the environment, for Christ is treated as a topic. The talks of the third day are geared to present a confident, optimistic concept of the Church in the world. The third day, in short, presents the Christian communities which radiate Christian life into the environment. How to live what is fundamental for being a Christian with others and thereby form Christian community in the world.

1. Fifth Meditation - *Christ's Message to the Cursillista* how does Christ want you to live in the world? Evangelizing and building Christian community into society.
2. *Study and Evangelization of Environments* - presents the strategy of the Movement for the Christian transformation of the world, and emphasizes that environments are or are not Christian to the degree that those who influence them are truly Christian. Thus the talk offers various prototypes and attitudes.
3. *Christian Life* - ^{of} piety, study and action should be a manifestation, a fostering and promotion of love of God, persons and the world.
4. *Christian Community* - the communal realization of God's saving plan, within the Movement's strategy: we cannot and should not "go it alone".
5. *Group and Ulireya* - describes a concrete and periodic opportunity which helps promote the double purpose of the Movement: the progressive conversion of the person, through living and sharing what is fundamental for being a Christian, and the progressive Christian transformation of society.

PART IV

THE MEDITATIONS

Introduction

These outlines should be understood in light of the section on "The Message of the Cursillo" in *Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement* (National Cursillo Center, 1974, pp. 152-171).

The meditations are an integral and essential part of the whole Cursillo experience. They compliment the talks, and with them, form the total message of the weekend. Yet, they have a unity of their own within the total Cursillo. They are linked and interdependent.

As the name suggests, the meditations are aids to the participants' personal reflection. The thrust of the meditations ought to be to initiate serious and prayerful reflection. The emphasis should be on helping the participants to get in touch with themselves and with Christ at a particular point within the four phases of the Cursillo: *preparation, proclamation, conversion, and insertion* (cf. Op. Cit., p. 153). The purpose is to help the participants to come to a better self-awareness and a better awareness of their relationship with God.

The meditations are not primarily content oriented. They seek to raise gently, yet firmly, questions appropriate to the participants' personal growth. They are not intended to disturb or convict the participants. Yet, the style is persuasive, natural, profound, and simple, as the Lord would do it. The manner of presentation should also reveal the spiritual director's own serious and prayerful reflection.

The source of each meditation is the Word of God. The spiritual director invites the participants to listen anew to the living Word of God. He sets an atmosphere in which the full force of the inspired Word can touch their lives. For this reason, he should work from the Scriptures and not just use them as supporting evidence for the points he wishes to make.

The Cursillo is to set a pattern for the rest of the lives of the participants. This is especially true in regard to the meditations. They should set a pattern for the participants' continued reflection on the Word of God. They will do so only if they give evidence of a deep reverence for the Scriptures and of the kind of reflection the participants might be expected to continue on their own.

In summary, the meditations ought to be:

based on the Word of God,
searching yet simple and
initiators of personal reflection.

The first three meditations comprise the first phase of the Cursillo -- the *preparation* of the participants, the spiritual retreat. The third meditation is also a transition between the *preparation* and *proclamation* phases. The fourth and fifth meditations set the theme for the third phase (conversion) and the *fourth phase* (insertion), respectively.

The usual length of the meditations is 10-20 minutes. Each meditation should be followed by a considerable amount of quiet time for reflection -- 10 minutes minimum.

The spiritual director ought not to underestimate the importance of the meditations. When handled well, they set the tone and the pace of the Cursillo. They provide a very necessary opportunity for personal prayer and reflection during the weekend. If they are treated in a hurried manner or if there is insufficient time for reflection afterwards, an essential part of the total Cursillo experience is lost.

I. KNOW YOURSELF

Purpose and Setting

This meditation begins the first phase of the Cursillo, the *preparation* of the participants to listen to and to accept the message that will be proclaimed. It does so by helping the participants to be more aware of who they are and of what their potentialities and limitations are. They are invited in this meditation to self-encounter, as the prerequisite for encounter with God. They are called to truth and self-knowledge, which sets them free to respond to God. Stress is placed on the uniqueness of each one's situation. They are set at ease regarding any "expected response" to the Cursillo.

Outline

This is the first of several meditations we will share during this weekend. A meditation is a sharing of some thoughts, usually from the Scriptures, for your personal, prayerful reflection. Please take advantage of the quiet time of this overnight retreat to talk over these things with God.

This meditation is based on the following Scripture:

Read MATTHEW 6:26-34

The disciples were worrying about many things. Perhaps you are worried – worried about your



past failures; worried about a problem now; worried about what will be expected of you at this Cursillo.

The point of the passage is that God provides for all our needs. He brought us here to provide especially for our spiritual needs. What He asks of us as we begin the Cursillo is to TRUST Him. He wants us to put aside all our cares – family, business, etc., – and, maybe, for the first time in our lives, seek His Kingdom alone.

Read MATTHEW 6:32-33

We need this quiet time for reflection, just as Jesus needed to withdraw to a quiet place occasionally with His disciples. We need to confront the fundamental questions of life, such as: Who am I? Where am I going? The only way to cope with living is to discover a meaning to our lives (cf. *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl). For many today, life is devoid of some or all of its meaning. They are bored and frustrated, often to the point of suicide. The critical problem in our world is the lack of serious reflection.

Are we too busy for serious reflection? Can we afford to just follow the crowd? Our Lord's words to His friend, Martha, are important to us:

Read LUKE 10:41-42

We can never allow activity, no matter how good it is, to crowd out serious reflection. We do so at our own peril.

We can begin tonight to put our lives in order by asking ourselves some fundamental questions. We can begin to establish priorities for living. We do not want to be like the foolish man in the Gospel who began to build a castle without checking to see if he could complete it. He went bankrupt and was laughed at by everyone. Maybe we are building dream castles we were never intended to build. If we are unhappy, maybe it is due to our failure to establish priorities. Purpose and peace go hand in hand.

How do we begin? As Socrates suggested: "Know yourself." We begin by taking a very honest look at ourselves, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal our strengths and our weaknesses. Each one of us is unique – we have our own particular set of potentialities and limitations. We need to know just what they are if we are to put order in our lives.

If we are honest with ourselves, we will find we have many more good qualities than bad. People are usually worse than others see them, but better than they see themselves. We should be happy about our good qualities and give thanks to God for them.

We will also discover some qualities to which we would rather not admit. Yet, it is important that we accept ourselves as we are, including our limitations. The first step toward overcoming our weaknesses is to admit that they exist.

It is very necessary that we know our condition if we hope to benefit from this Cursillo. This means being humble (humus equals earth) – like the earth, open and receptive to the seed. The foundation upon which the Cursillo builds is this honest self-knowledge.

The Cursillo can build for the future only if:

– We are available to God's grace.



– We make the best use of this opportunity.

– We do not prejudge the Cursillo – there is no "expected response."

So, take time now to begin to KNOW YOURSELF.

NOTES

II. THE PRODIGAL SON

Purpose and Setting

After the first meditation, many will see that theirs could well be the story of a prodigal son, and that the only way to live is to return to the Father. This meditation presents the reality of the goodness and the mercy of God. We see God in relationship to sinful man. The two sons in the parable appear in natural relief to the Father's attitude.


It is natural that uneasiness of conscience and a beginning of repentance have been awakened in the participants. Using this starting point, but without accenting it, the objective of the meditation is to place the participants at the mercy of God. However, the meditation is *not* an immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Penance.

It is important to share the parable, rather than to talk about it. As it is shared, the participants will identify with it as their story, since it is everyone's story.

Outline

1. KNOWING THE FATHER

We know much *about* God. But do we know Him? What is He like as a person? What are His interests? How does He think? Tonight, as we begin to know ourselves, we would like to know especially His reaction to our sinful condition.



Jesus used parables to give us an insight into His Father's personality. We learn about the Father's feeling in regard to our sinfulness in one parable in particular — that of *The Prodigal Son*. The parable is misnamed. It is really about the forgiving Father. As we listen now to the parable, we dwell on the Father's mercy rather than on the son's misery.

2. EVERYONE'S STORY

Read LUKE 15:11-16

It is typical of the human condition to be completely self-centered. We have done what the younger son did many times in so many different ways. For example:

The more self-centered we become, the more miserable we are. (Wanting to eat the food of pigs was about as low as any Jew could sink!) By our self-centeredness, we also cut ourselves off from all friends.

3. CONVERSION

Read LUKE 15:17-20

Sometimes God permits us to fall in order to bring us to our senses. There is no point in regretting the past. We need to learn by our mistakes and rise above them.

The first step on the road back to God is not easy. It requires being humble enough to acknowledge our sinful condition. But the difficulty arises only because we forget the mercy of the Father. The moment we decide: "I will leave this place (condition) and go to my Father . . .," He receives us back.

4. GOD'S MERCY

Read LUKE 15:21-24

God awaits our return: "While he was still a long way off. . .he ran to the boy . . .," God is always ready to forgive: ". . .he clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly."

God's forgiveness is complete — the sin is forgotten and we are restored to full membership in His family. The father in the parable would not hear of his son's being one of his servants.

God rejoices in our return: "And they began to celebrate."

5. HUMAN REACTION



Read LUKE 15:25-30

To demonstrate the greatness of Our Father's mercy, Jesus shows us by contrast the usual human reaction to the sinner. The older son represents those we call "good." He reacts the way even good human beings tend to react. He refuses to forgive. He is jealous and bitter about his father's mercy. It is evident that his devotion to his father has been motivated, in part, by self-interest. Because he is self-centered, he cannot forgive and forget the sin of his younger brother. He even disowns his brother: "But, this son of yours . . ."

6. CONCLUSION

Read LUKE 15:31-32

Our Father is waiting for the first sign from us that we want to return — that we want to be fully members of His family. He wants to make our return easy. He comes to meet us. He wants to rid us of the burden of sin. He wants us to share in an unending celebration of peace and joy. All we have to do is be willing to return: "I will leave this place (condition) and return to my Father."



III. THE THREE GLANCES OF CHRIST

Purpose and Setting

This is the morning meditation of the First Day. It ends the *preparation* phase of the Cursillo and begins the *proclamation* phase. It should give the participants the final impulse to be open to the truth. The purpose is to awaken in them personal responsibility for opening or closing themselves to Christ.

To help the participants locate themselves, the meditation presents the response of three different persons to Jesus:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| – Rich Young Man: | Refusal because of difficulty and cowardice. |
| – Judas: | Refusal because of dishonesty and pride. |
| – Peter: | Failure due to self-confidence and weakness but followed by genuine repentance. |

The meditation seeks to bring the participants to see the attitudes they *presently* have, not the ones they should have. It raises the questions: What does Jesus see in me? How will I respond to His invitation?

Outline

The Cursillo is an encounter with Jesus Christ. Maybe you are not sure what to expect because you do not know Him well. So, this morning we look at three encounters He had with different people. We want to see how they responded.

1. RICH YOUNG MAN

Read MARK 10:17-22

This was a good young man. He had been living a good life. He was searching sincerely to do God's will. Jesus saw the goodness in him: "Jesus looked at him steadily and loved him."

Jesus invited him to remove the one obstacle to his continued growth in relationship with God – his excessive attachment to material things. It might seem to us that Jesus demanded too much. However, He never challenges us beyond the strength He gives us to meet the challenges. (cf. I Cor. 10:13)

The Young Man was generous to a point. However, he failed because of cowardice and unwillingness to let go of personal comfort. His situation was particularly sad because he had so much promise. His decision to cling to his material possessions rather than entrust his life into Jesus' hands made him an unhappy man.

Is this your story? Are you an unhappy person, caught between your desire to live for the



Lord and your attachments to creature comforts? Why do you lack the courage to trust God for every detail of your life?

2. JUDAS

Read JOHN 12:4-6

Nobody abandons God in a moment. We gradually fall away. We allow evils of various kinds to build barriers between God and us. Judas' barriers were dishonesty, greed, and pride. Ours may be different. But unless we keep these evils in check, they will eventually separate us from God.

We may fool those around us into thinking we are devoted to the Lord, while refusing to turn from these evils. Judas fooled the other eleven apostles. Jesus knew the truth about Judas. He continued to search him out and invite him to return. He did so, especially on the last night they were together. He washed Judas' feet, inviting him to be cleansed of sin and to be one with the family again. He tried to warn Judas, but Judas had hardened his heart. "He went out into the night. . ." (John 13:30) of evil and despair.

When Judas first responded to Jesus' call, he was as enthusiastic as the others. He had high hopes of sharing in Jesus' ministry. He never intended to separate himself from Jesus. However, he allowed greed, dishonesty, and pride to intervene and blind him to the truth.

When eventually he did regret his action, he despaired of forgiveness and took his own life. (cf. Matthew 27:3-5)

Has this been our story? Have we been blinded to the truth about Jesus because we have permitted various evils to intervene? Are we despairing instead of looking to Jesus for forgiveness and healing?

3. PETER

Read MARK 14:27-31

Peter was a very genuine human being. He was really dedicated to Jesus. However, he had one serious flaw – he trusted too much in his own efforts to live the Christ life. He was overly self-confident. So he made rash and hurtful statements: “Even if all lose faith, I will not.” (Mark 14:29)

Because he relied on his own strength, he failed when the real challenge came. He completely disowned Jesus and was a source of scandal to his brothers.

Read LUKE 22:54-62

However, Peter had an important redeeming factor in his favor. He was humble enough to

repent. All it took was one glance from Jesus to cause him to weep for his sin. In spite of his rash self-confidence, he continued to love Jesus.

He had learned that Jesus understands human failings and that He forgives. He discovered that as long as he continued to give himself unreservedly in love to Jesus, he would have the strength to overcome all obstacles.

Read JOHN 21:15-17

Peter became the leader because he loved the Lord. Others had better human qualities, but Peter had what was essential.

4. CONCLUSION

Jesus is reaching out to us in this Cursillo. What is our response?

- Are we afraid of the opportunity and walk away?
- Are we completely or partially blind to the opportunity because of sin?
- Are we imperfect, but willing, because we love Him?



IV. THE FIGURE OF CHRIST

Purpose and Setting

This is the morning meditation of the Second Day. It begins the *conversion* phase of the Cursillo. At this point, the participants are realizing that the only solution for their lives is God. They know that God saves in and through Jesus. Their difficulty is how they are to relate to Him.

The purpose of the meditation is to help the participants relate to Jesus as a *person*, God and man, the perfect revelation of the Father's love. The meditation should express the fullness of both His divinity and His humanity, but united in one person. Because He is human, we can relate to Him — He understands, He shares in our struggle. Because He is divine, He saves — He is the solution to our problems.

Because of the background of the participants, it is usually necessary to dwell more on Jesus' humanity rather than on His divinity. However, care must be taken to give a balanced presentation of divinity and humanity united in one person.

The spiritual director should express this vision of Jesus in whatever incidents from the Gospels appeal to him and have an appeal for the participants. Other scriptures may be substituted for those suggested here.

Outline

. WE DO NOT KNOW JESUS

Jesus is different from every other historical figure. "He lives" (II Cor. 13:4) – this is the message of the Resurrection. Therefore, we can know Him today (know in the scriptural sense, that is, have a personal relationship with Him).

Yet, the truth of the matter is that the majority of us do not really know Him. Just as John the Baptist declared: "There is one among you whom you do not recognize" (John 1:26). We are like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus – we do not recognize the Risen Lord, God and man, who is with us.

We seek to know Him today as a person who invites us to a close personal relationship with Himself. As a person, He is both God and Man.

2. JESUS IS GOD

Jesus claims to be God: "I tell you most solemnly, before Abraham ever was, I AM" (John 8:58). He is the "I AM" of the Old Testament. Those who were present understood Him to claim to be God.

By His way of life, by His teaching, by His miracles ("signs"), He gives evidence that He is God. Either He is what He claimed to be or He is the greatest imposter that ever lived. As the Christian community reflected upon the events of His life, especially the Resurrection, it came to believe in Him as God. (cf. John 6:67-69)



3. JESUS IS MAN

Jesus is not a distant God, more feared than loved. He is Emmanuel – God with us – because He is one of us. He is as fully human as any human being. He is like us in all things except sin.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| – He works and grows tired: | JOHN 4:5-6 (Samaria) |
| – He is disappointed: | JOHN 14:9 (Philip) |
| – He is angry: | JOHN 2:13-17 (Temple) |
| – He suffers: | MARK 14:32-42 (Gethsemane) |
| – He loves: | JOHN 11:36-37 (Lazarus) |
| – He empathizes: | LUKE 7:11-17 (Widow); JOHN 2:1-11 (Cana) |
| – He understands: | JOHN 8:3-11 (Adulteress); LUKE 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus) |
| – He is firm: | JOHN 18:33-40 (Pilate) |
| – He is gentle: | LUKE 18:15-17 (Children) |
| – He asks for support: | MATT. 26:36-41 (Agony) |

4. JESUS IS SAVIOR AND LORD

Because He is both God and Man, He is the one mediator between God and man. He alone

makes possible our return to the Father.

Read I Timothy 2:5-6

The saving work of Jesus is expressed beautifully in an early hymn quoted by St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians:

Read PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11

Jesus is Lord because God has reconciled all things in Him, (cf. Col. 1:18-19) He is the center of our existence. (cf. Gal. 2:20-21)

5. CONCLUSION

Jesus lives. He is God with us. Because He is with us, we can approach Him with confidence. We can relate to Him in a fully human manner.

Jesus invites us to encounter Him in a new way today!



NOTES

V. MESSAGE OF CHRIST TO THE CURSILLISTA

Purpose and Setting

This is the morning meditation on the Third Day. It opens the final phase of the Cursillo – *insertion* of the cursillista into the world. Jesus is seen as addressing the cursillistas as individual persons and calling them to penetrate their particular environments with the Gospel. The responsibility for discovering one's own personal vocation is emphasized, as is the necessity of support community. Assurance is given of sharing in Jesus' victory. So, the meditation is a challenge to do great things and an assurance that they are possible.


The meditation reinforces the encounter with others begun in *Action and Leaders*. It does not ask "why," but "for whom" Christ has called us.

The meditation draws heavily upon Jesus' final discourse. (John 14-17) The spiritual director should relate it to the development of the particular Cursillo so that it is as personal as possible to the participants.

Outline

The Cursillo is rather like the time Jesus spent in forming His Apostles. As we enter the final phase of this Cursillo, we reflect on Jesus' final words to the Twelve:

You did not choose me; no, I chose you (John 15:16)



Jesus brought us to this weekend for a purpose. We have encountered Him in a new way. Like the Apostles at the Transfiguration, we would like to stay on this mountaintop forever. But this mountain vision is given to prepare us for valley duty:

. . .and I commissioned you to go forth and to bear fruit, fruit that will last. (John 15:16)

Jesus brought us here in order to send us to do His work in the world. The call of the Cursillo does not end with ourselves – it must be lived in our environments. We are to bear the fruit of apostolic action. This is the fruit that will endure.

Jesus had only a few followers after three years of ministry. We imagine that the Son of God ought to have been more successful. What we fail to understand is the strategy Jesus is teaching us for reaching our world – that of building Christian community. He spent His time forming the Twelve as a community, knowing that His work would endure as long as they remained united.

That night Jesus prayed that they and we would remain committed to the strategy of building Christian community:

May they all be one.
Father, may they be one in us;
as you are in me and I am in you,
so that the world may believe it was you
who sent me. (John 17:21)

It is only as genuine Christian community that we are a sign of His presence to the world. We cannot be effective in the apostolate alone.

Our effectiveness will also be proportional to our living union with Jesus (cf. *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, Vatican II, No. 4):

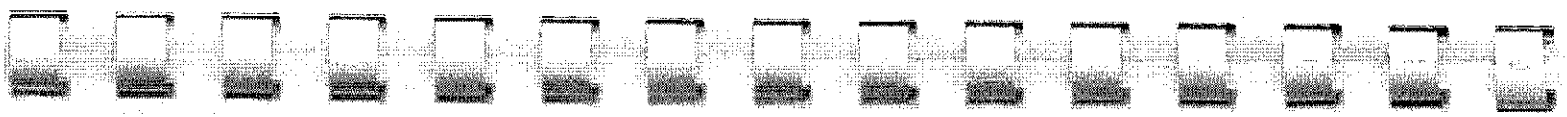
Whoever remains in me, with me in him,
bears fruit in plenty;
for cut off from me you can do nothing.
(John 15:5)

Only if His life flows freely in the branches can they bear fruit. So, if we are to bear fruit, our progressive conversion must continue after this weekend.

In Him, we have a revolutionary power:

I tell you most solemnly,
whoever believes in me
will perform the same works as I do myself,
he will perform even greater works.
(John 14:12)

Jesus (His Spirit) is transforming power. In Him (guided and empowered by His Spirit), we can do the impossible: —



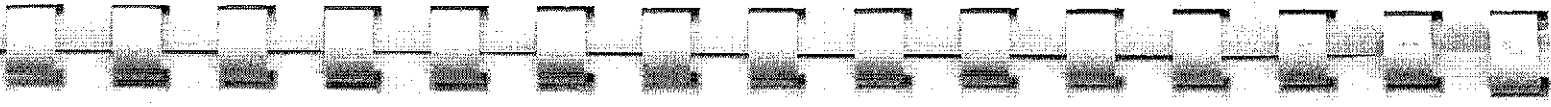
...bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth. (Eph. 1:10)

The mark of a true disciple is that he is bearing fruit:

It is to the glory of my Father
that you should bear much fruit,
and then you will be my disciples.
(John 15:8)

The challenge should not frighten us. All we have to do is to bear witness to what we now know to be true about Jesus' victory. We do not have to win the victory. All we have to do is to proclaim it:

Have courage, I have overcome the world! (John 16:33)



PART V

THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S TALKS (9)

HABITUAL
GRACE

Purpose and Setting

This is the second talk on the First Day. It follows *Ideal* – the call to be a human person. The *Grace* talk is a call to be a Christian human person. It leads into *Laypersons in the Church* - the call to Christian community.

Grace and *Laypersons in the Church* compliment each other and together proclaim “what is fundamental for being a Christian.” It is important, therefore, that *Grace* be a very clear invitation to a new relationship with God. It should also show how the candidate can respond to that invitation.

The invitation to a new relationship with God flows from His great love for us, seen especially in Jesus. The response is faith – the commitment of the whole person to live in love with God. The process is conversion (*metanoia*).

The *Grace* talk is central to the *proclamation* phase of the *Cursillo*. Its style should be especially that of *kerygmatic proclamation*. (cf. PART I) The spiritual director’s personal testimony to his or her response to God’s invitation is essential to this proclamation.

Duration: not more than one hour.

Outline

(It is recommended that New Testaments be distributed to the candidates before this talk. The Spiritual Director should point out that the Bible, especially the New Testament, is the sourcebook for the weekend).

The *Ideal* talk was an invitation to be fully a human person. However, God calls us to an even greater dignity – to an even more wonderful existence.

1. WE ARE INVITED TO A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

All through the Old Testament the history of God's dealings with man is one of repeated invitations to a covenant relationship – a mutual relationship of love. The Prophets, especially, called the unfaithful people back to a genuine covenant relationship. (An example or two might be cited). Jesus began His ministry by calling men back to this relationship.

Read MARK 1:15

St. John summarizes the Good News: "God is Love" (I John 4:8). Too often we read this statement to mean that God gives us some things: material goods, life, spiritual blessings. John is proclaiming that God gives Himself. Genuine love is self-giving. So, God's love for us results in an altogether unprecedented sharing in *His life*.



Read I JOHN 4:9

This is the point Jesus was making to the Samaritan woman. She was looking for something. He was offering *life*.

Read JOHN 4:7-14

Verse 10: Do we realize that God is inviting us today? Do we understand to what He is inviting us?

Verse 14: The life He offers fulfills every need we have.

God is reaching out to us in love and seeking to share His life with us. His love calls for our free response. We can accept, reject, or ignore His love. It can be fruitful in us only if it is accepted. Accepting it means loving in return, entrusting our lives to Him. It means entering into a covenant relationship of love with Him.

This is how the Second Vatican Council understood revelation: "Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends and lives among them, so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself" (Dei Verbum No. 2). Revelation is essentially God's loving invitation to fellowship with Him.

(In order to make the sharing of life with Jesus as clear and concrete as possible, use might be made of the parable in Peter Fransen's *The New Life of Grace*, pages 7-9. The parable could be read and explained to show how Jesus' (God's) life is not biological but personal – to show that He wants to share His ideas, openness, honesty, love, care, etc. He wants us to be like Him personally in

our attitudes and dispositions – really like Christ, in the same way some children, spouses and friends become like their parents, spouses and friends in personality and disposition.

This is the significance of Jesus telling us to call God, “Our Father.” He probably used the term “Abba,” meaning “Dad.” He wanted to say to us most emphatically that we are called to be true sons and daughters of the Father.

The moment we say “YES” to this love relationship with Our Father, He begins to transform us and perfect us in every way. Jesus stated that it is His *missio* to make possible for us an abundant life:

Read JOHN 10:10

This abundant life includes all our human and spiritual needs (not necessarily all we want). In Jesus, Our Father fulfills all our needs: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts will not rest until they rest in you.” (St. Augustine)

Jesus describes this new abundant life as a treasure and as a pearl:

Read MATTHEW 13:44-46

So, the Christian is one who IS making a wonderful discovery. One who is experiencing a whole new dimension to living. He is willing to risk everything else in order to achieve it. He is overjoyed at his discovery.

Why is it that many Christians never seem to make this discovery?



2. HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE THE ABUNDANT LIFE?

Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus teaches us how we can come to this new relationship with the Father:

Read JOHN 3:1-5

Verse 1:

Who was Nicodemus? A pharisee and a learned Jew, that is, he practiced his religion and he knew about God.

Verse 2:

Why did he come to the carpenter's son? He saw a new quality of life in Jesus that attracted him.

Verse 3:

“Most solemnly” – a very important declaration.

“reign of God” – cf. Luke 17:20-21: the new relationship with Our Father.

“no one can see” – experience

“unless he is begotten from above” – unless he allows the Father's love to radically change him (e.g. caterpillar to butterfly) – what St. Paul calls a “new creation.”

Verse 4: NICODEMUS DID NOT UNDERSTAND

Verse 5: Jesus reemphasized what He had said.

“Water and the Spirit” is clearly a reference to Baptism.

Did our Baptism mean a radical transformation?

What did happen in our Baptism? The seed of new life was planted. That seed cannot grow and bear fruit unless it is accepted. Cf. the parable of the sower (Luke 8:4-15).


Why has the seed of divine life not developed fully in us? St. John responds to this difficulty:

Read JOHN 1:11-12

“Accept him” means to believe, to have saving faith, that is, to enter into a saving relationship with God, through Jesus. If we accept Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord, then we experience the abundant life granted to the children of the Father.

For Baptism to be effective, we must personally enter into a love relationship with Our Father, through Jesus. This faith involves us as *total persons*:

| | |
|------------|---|
| Intellect: | faith is reasonable |
| Emotions: | respond with enthusiasm but not dependent upon feelings |



Will: most important - a personal, free decision is involved

This is how the Second Vatican Council understood faith, the response to God’s loving invitation to fellowship: “The obedience of faith must be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals, and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him” (Dei Verbum 5).

The conversion (*metanoia*) is a complete as we can make it at the time. The process of progressive conversion is life-long. You have already committed yourselves. You are receiving a call now to grow deeper in your love relationship with Our Father.

Let us go back to Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus for a moment:

Read JOHN 3:7-10

Verse 7: All this may seem new to you.

Verse 8: It is more important to experience than to explain this new relationship with Our Father.

There is no need to fear this commitment:

Read JOHN 3:16

Remember what makes this relationship possible is Our Father's unconditional love. He loves us regardless of our past, present, or future. He wants our salvation. There is only one condition: **faith - entrust ourselves to His love.**

Jesus is waiting for our response.

Read REVELATIONS 3:20

If we invite Him, He comes (no doubt about it). So, we are faced with a *fundamental option* to accept and respond to Our Father's love and experience an abundant life *OR* to ignore or reject His love and experience continuing frustration.


3. PERSONAL TESTIMONY

(The speaker shares his or her own growth in relationship with God emphasizing that he or she is still in process. Special moments of growth ought to be shared. The speaker might conclude with a favorite Scripture verse; MATTHEW 6:33).

4. GRACE

Title of talk:

"Grace" equals the life of God communicated freely to man and accepted freely by him through faith.



i.e. a relationship of love with God. This is how St. Paul sees *Grace*:

Read GALATIANS 2:20-21

God enters into this relationship with us as we are! He did not ask the Samaritan woman or Nicodemus to change. Rather He promised to transform them. God loves us **AS WE ARE** – with all our human qualities – good and bad.

Grace does not detract from or replace our human nature. Grace transforms our nature. We continue to be and act, but now in union with God. So we experience a new *purpose, power, and peace* in Him.

Grace is God's free gift to us:

Read EPHESIANS 2:8-10

However, a gift is not truly a gift until it is accepted.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF GOD'S FAMILY (Social dimension of Grace)

(In this section the social dimension of grace is treated briefly, as an introduction to what will be said later in both the spiritual director's and lay talks).

Because we share life with God, we are personally related to each member of the Trinity:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| – Father: | sons and daughters |
| – Jesus: | brothers and sisters |
| –Holy Spirit: | the source of the life we share with God. |

We are also related personally to each member of God's family. We are drawn into a community of love with all believers. This has most important consequences for our Christian living, which will be discussed in detail later. (cf. I Cor. 12:12-26)

The Good News is that being

- sons and daughters of the Father
- brothers and sisters of Jesus
- and friends of the Holy Spirit

is the BASIC SOLUTION TO ALL OUR NEEDS.

We will spend the rest of this weekend learning how to live effectively as members of God's family.



THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S TALKS

FAITH

Purpose and Setting

In this talk - originally entitled "Actual Grace" - the anthropological aspect of grace is emphasized: the human being responds to God, who offers a share in His own existence to that person, by accepting God's plan for salvation. Faith is the response of the person to God, who gives Himself to him or her through grace: thus, the new title of this talk.

It would not be surprising if, in light of the challenging teaching which has been given, the participants wanted to seek refuge in the acknowledgement of their weakness and limitations, seeking in them an easy way to evade serious consideration of the truths that they have heard which, without doubt, do disturb them. This talk ought to remove such prejudice and reassure them of:

- the power to realize the ideal which has been presented to them;
- the power to overcome the obstacles which they meet;
- the power to transform their entire life into that of an evangelizer.

Probably, the participants have already experienced difficulties in their environment, which the team members have already detected through their personal contact with them. It is important to have sensed the psychological state of the 3 Day Cursillo in order to bring out here the possible solutions to their difficulties.

The clear teaching of the spiritual director who gives this talk and his attitude, which are both determined in a very human way and supernaturally optimistic, will be an effective response to the difficulties which could be beginning to appear.

It will be most helpful if the spiritual director shares some specific information regarding the "palanca" which has been supporting the Cursillo. However, he should be careful that the talk not be a sermon or a conference, but a lively, pleasant, intimate and insightful *talk*.

The purpose is to proclaim that if God calls each person to participate in His divine nature, that person - if he or she wishes - can accept God's plan. The grace of God must be synchronized with the person's freedom. Even though God reaches out to share His divine life, He cannot embrace man or woman if the latter does not reach out to meet God. With free will there is a *choice* between God's or our own.

Faith is the person's acceptance of God's plan. Through faith, the person commits himself - totally and voluntarily - to the revealed truth, which is Christ. The grace of God is needed in order to give this response. God enables the person to make this response. Each person, each event, each circumstance is a new call from God.

It must remain clear that the true meaning of Christian realism is this:

- - the absolute limitation of a person if that person alienates him or herself from God;
- - immense possibilities for the person if he or she responds to the One who loves him or her.

It is true that "Without Me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5). However, it is no less true that: "I can do all things in Him Who strengthens me" (Phillippians 4:13).

This is the origin of the biblical insistence upon the necessity and force of prayer: If the person wishes, they can succeed.



Duration: Not more than one hour.

Outline

1. GOD'S OFFER

The talk on *Grace* presupposes an offer from God: "He loved us first" (I John 4:10).

In the Bible, Jesus frequently says: "I have chosen you" (John 15:16). This is a *choosing*, a surprising call to friendship with Him.

The mystery is even greater when we realize that God makes this offer, but does not force us. He awaits my response. Everything depends on our decision to respond to God.

It is not just a question of God's waiting for my response. Everything is conditioned by my decision, both for me and for the many that the Lord has linked to me, for my decision makes possible - or makes impossible - the realization of God's offer. God cannot be the friend of a swindler, a drunk, a thief, a prostitute and the likes. However, these persons can be friends of God if they respond to Him, as some did to Jesus. God can be the friend of anyone who wants to accept *His friendship*.

We can evaluate our response by contrasting:

- - my life up until this point, which helps me to know myself, with
- - the talk on *Ideal*, which helps me to see how to be fully human,
- and
- - the talk on *Grace*, where I understand what I can become by the love of God.

This contrast tells me that I have to break with many things or correct many deviations. The effort necessary to make the change is frightening and we have the feeling of being faced with the impossible.

However, if I say "yes", have I any guarantee that I will succeed?

2. THE WEAKNESS OF MAN AND THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD

Can I break with the past. . . . , make reparation. . . . , overcome? (It will be helpful to make reference to particular problematic situations which relate to the participants in the Cursillo.)

The answer is "you can". I, and you, and you, we all can.

What is the remedy for my weaknesses, for my fears? GRACE!

Grace enables me to make my decisions with certainty. If I do not abandon Him, God himself becomes my *guarantee* and makes it possible for me to accept His offer. Grace is a real capacity to do great things.

Read ROMANS 8:34, 38-39

"The Church believes that Christ, who died and was raised for the sake of all, can show man the way and strengthen him through the Spirit in order to be worthy of his destiny; nor is there any other name under heaven given among men by which they can be saved" (G.S. 10). Only we can choose to reject His support and not accept His guarantee. There is no need to be afraid once we count on Christ, since we no longer depend on our own efforts, which are always limited, but on the almighty strength of God.

3. HOW DOES GOD ENABLE US?

The council tells us: "Christ. . . offers man. . . light and strength" (G.S. 10). *He offers His light:*

- He causes us to see our horizons with new eyes;
- He causes us to consider our plans from different angles;
- He causes us to recognize new values, to which we had given no importance before.

It is a matter of seeing what happens, recognizing new values, and accepting those values as the criterion for life.

With the death of an acquaintance; with the witness of a friend; with a moment of worry, joy or happiness; or of pain, danger, or threat; with this very Cursillo; God can illuminate my entire existence. All the events of our lives are circumstances which can be converted into transmitters of light.

He offers His strength:

The gift which we call grace, strengthens my vision of reality so that I can carry out my decision: "All things are possible for me in Him Who gives me strength" - so I can respond to my highest calling.

God enables us with His light and strength through the tiny, innumerable "miracles" of every hour.

Read ROMANS 8:28

It is not surprising that this saying of the Cursillo Movement, with its profound theological content, has become so universal:

"Christ and I, an overwhelming majority."

4. THIS ENABLING IS NECESSARY FOR GROWTH

Unfortunately, experience teaches me my weakness. Dare I hope to experience anything else on my own? Without the light and strength of God - to see, to decide and to do - I will not go very far.

We hear the words of Christ addressed to us:

Read JOHN 15:5

Read JOHN 6:44

Thus, we are sure that the Lord will not fail: God makes me an offer. He would not have made it if I could not accept it. I will shut out the light only by closing my eyes; I will be incapable of responding only by refusing His strength.



5. WHEN DOES GOD GIVE ME THIS LIGHT AND THIS STRENGTH?

The answer is brief: *Always.*

In colloquial terms, we can say that God is always ready to prevent us from being "crowned" with the faults which come from our weakness.

If we consult the Bible - the word of God - we find the guarantee of this exceptional assurance:

Read ISAIAH 42:1

Read EZEKIEL 33:11

Read I TIMOTHY 2:4

So, God has made up His mind. He has offered me a gift. Is it available to me when I need it? Will it be an unfulfilled promise? No.

Read I JOHN 4:9-10

We have an absolute guarantee that His offer is available to us because of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Everything has been redeemed.

Read EPHESIANS 2:8-10

Read ROMANS 3:22-25

For this reason, no one has valid excuses. (It is helpful to relate the talk to life at this point, suggesting the principal excuses by which the participants seek to excuse themselves. This can be done by pointing to the problems which have been detected already in the Cursillo and by using examples and stories which make the points.) Christ responded in love to the Father and we are challenged to share in the same love response.

The Lord is always with us. In spite of your temperament, your difficulties, all your circumstances - there is no situation which cannot be overcome with the light and the force of grace.

Thus, we can conclude that holiness is always possible. If others have been able, then I ought to be able. If we are not saints, it will be because of pride, laziness, cowardice, etc. I can be lost only because of myself. God is faithful to His word.

6. HOW DOES GOD ACT IN OUR LIFE?

Grace illuminates, helps us discover and realize what we have discovered.

Grace brings conscience back into line: by grace we are conscious of the evil we do, of the hurt we inflict, or the things we do not do that we should do.

Grace establishes our scale of values: it gives importance to that which is really important and it categorizes our problems according to their real importance.

Grace makes us feel uneasy living in sin. Everyone of us will remember, without doubt, situations in which we were restless and unhappy after committing some evil.

Grace helps us to recognize that we have double standards.

Grace permits us to discover new values - justice, truth, the family, service to others - which previously did not attract our attention.

St. Paul is a very appropriate witness to these truths, as he is described in Chapter 9 of the Acts of the Apostles:

- he believed he was doing good persecuting the Church
- he discovers that he is doing evil;
- he reacts: "What do you want of me Lord?" and
- he is sent by the Lord Jesus to the community of Damascus which helps him and supports him.

Note this example for, when the occasion arises, we do not find it easy to accept the fact that we have done evil, to be open to correction, and to a change of direction. For example, in an accident, both parties believe that the other is at fault.

On the other hand, we justify our faults easily: withdrawal from religion, excess of alcohol, wild anger, uncorrected injustice, hate, ambition, the bad environment, etc. There is no lack of excuses; but that is all they are - excuses.

7. WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

Consequences arise from our decision which are often transcendental. We are choosing a

great deal by our "yes" or our "no", both individually and socially.

Individually: The decision depends on the individual. Anyone can do as he pleases; but there is more to it than that. He can do what he wishes with his hands, but not with that which he lifts up in his hands. No one lives alone; everyone affects others with his decision - boss, spouse, parent, children, public official, worker, student, friend, etc. Even if we don't want it to, our decision has consequences in the lives of others.

Socially: Although we are linked to those around us, we recognize some and disregard others.


Nobody destroys himself without destroying others to a greater or lesser degree. In all of our difficult decisions, we can hear the question of the Lord: "Cain, what have you done to your brother?" Christ, who permitted Himself to be crucified so that His brothers might have life, asks us this question. God, who placed us in the world, gives us the keys to the universe.

8. WHAT ARE THE GUARANTEES OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS HELP?

Read MATTHEW 7:7 & 9

Prayer becomes the key to our strength. He who knows that salvation comes to us from God is stupid if he does not seek it. God does not want self-sufficient persons, but persons who, being very human, sense their own limitations and are open to His almighty mercy.

Perhaps you feel incapable of breaking with that which binds you or enslaves you. It is true that you cannot do this, or what will be expected in the future, with your own strength. (It is



helpful to present some real or presumed conflicts from your own life experience or another's, that is personal.) However, it is true also that you can bend your knees and cry out to God - your Father, your Brother, your Friend: "Lord, give me strength!"

9. CONCLUSION

Now it is possible to answer a question which perhaps someone has asked without finding an answer: What is Cursillo?

It is your opportunity; it is a great occasion! Many are praying for you without knowing you. Precisely because those of us who are responsible for the Cursillo seek to live our faith, I can assure you that we would not dare to participate in it if we did not know that there are many who are offering prayers and sacrifices so that God will send down upon all a torrent of His light and strength.

Palanca: The "Palancas" are shared as evidence of the Cursillo Movement's reliance on the guidance and strength of the Spirit. They also bear witness to the fact that the Spirit is present and active in the community of believers.

We have been seeking and are seeking the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit in this Cursillo - this whole prayer effort of Masses, prayers, sacrifices, etc., we call "PALANCA" (Spanish for a lever).

In the Cursillo witness is given to the solidarity of the members of the Church through the letters and messages which come from many individuals and groups, telling about the prayers and sacrifices being performed. These PALANCAS are of decisive importance for the success of the

Cursillo. They represent the supernatural backing of many persons and communities who pray and make sacrifices that we be open to truth and grace. (cf. Fundamental Ideas, pp. 144-145)

So you will know that you have the prayer support of a worldwide community of brothers and sisters, I would like to share some of the Palanca letters we have received.

No doubt, many who will participate in a Cursillo will turn their back on the truth. Many will contradict with their life what they lived in their Cursillo, betraying truth and goodness. Nevertheless, very few will not have confronted the truth which saves us during the Cursillo. I beg God that none of you will fail to respond.

The early Christian communities, although very small in the number of their members, had a triumphal spirit because they were living the fact of being Christians, the joy of going to conquer the world for God. Try to accept with confidence, God's offer. Give your "Yes" here and now, knowing that it can be very decisive in the lives of many. MY RESPONSE BENEFITS MANY; MY RESPONSE BENEFITS IN ETERNITY.



SACRAMENTS (3)

Purpose and Setting

Means of Grace

This is the second talk on the Second Day – the *conversion* phase of the Cursillo. The participants commit themselves to living the Christian life as the means by which they can sustain that life are explained to them – practices of piety, study of the Christian ideal (Jesus) and apostolic action. In the Second Day, the participants encounter Jesus in person.

The objective of the talk is: "to prepare the cursillista for the authentic living of Christianity in its two dimensions – the "vertical" – discovering the transforming work of Christ through the Sacraments, so that a personal, sincere and committed encounter with Him may be realized; and the "horizontal" – centering the cursillista in the communal living of Christianity." (*Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement*, p. 163)

The sacraments, rather than things received, are expressive actions of Christ; they consecrate the Christians for union with God, and create communion between them. Each sacrament should be an existential encounter with Christ and with the Church community. The sacramental life commits the person by an intensifying of "vertical" and "horizontal" dimensions of the Christian life. (Op. cit., pp. 163-164)

The Sacraments are presented as the central encounters with Jesus in the Church which make possible, the fullness of the Christian life. The emphasis is still on kerygma – Jesus' saving action

d) Within the Church we encounter the Risen Lord in many ways:

e) The Sacraments are seven special encounters with the Risen Lord in the Church – the community of believers.

–They are as intimate, personal and effective as the encounters Jesus had with many individuals and groups in the Gospels.

–“The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ, and finally, to give worship to God.” (Sacrosanctum Concilium 59)

Sanctify: communicate grace – deepen our union with God.

Build: every Sacrament is an action of the community of faith and has consequences for the community. They are the saving actions of Jesus within the Church.

Worship: the Sacraments are an integral part of the liturgy – the communal worship of the Church. They are to give glory to God. “It follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can match its claim to efficacy, nor equal the degree of it.” (Sacrosanctum Concilium 7)



f) A response of faith is essential if sacraments are to be fully effective.

– Jesus demanded faith:

Read MATTHEW 15:21-28

– Without a response of faith, the sacraments become empty rituals. We must expect to encounter the saving Lord.

2. BAPTISM (New Life)

Recall what we said about Baptism in the GRACE talk – it initiates a new relationship with God.

Baptism plunges us into the Paschal Mystery - the saving action of Jesus.

Read ROMANS 6:3-11

– we pass from death to life as Jesus did – from self-centeredness to Christ centeredness.

– like Him we pass to a new life of victory over evil – we can be victorious over every sin in Him.

Baptism incorporates us into the life of the Trinity (Sons of the Father, Brothers of Christ and Temples of the Holy Spirit).

Baptism unites us to the community of believers.

Read GALATIANS 3:26-28


– by Baptism we are all equally members of the Church and share equally the responsibility for its mission in the world.

– the Church is not a holy huddle. It is our essential support community, where we are encouraged to grow in relationship with God and to fulfill the mission of Jesus in the world.

So, if we accept and live our Baptism, we will live in Jesus' victory, and with the support and encouragement of the community, we will fulfill His mission.

3. CONFIRMATION (Witness)

Originally Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist were closely linked as one rite of initiation. We see Confirmation as a continuation of the process of conversion begun in Baptism in which we share in the mystery of Pentecost.



Confirmation is the sacrament of Christian maturity. It celebrates our being filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Ephesians 5:18). Recall what we said yesterday about the Holy Spirit.

If we are living our Confirmation, we will be present to the Holy Spirit as the Friend and Helper who dwells in us. We will seek His *guidance* and rely on His *power*. As a result we will live an abundant and fruitful life:

– **Abundant:** in which the Spirit provides for all our needs.

Read Romans 8:11

– **Fruitful:** in which we are effective witnesses.

Read ACTS 1:8

Confirmation enables us to fulfill the mandate of every baptized Christian to be a witness: "On all Christians therefore is laid the splendid burden of working to make the divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world" (Apostolicam Actuositatem 3).

We ought to expect the Holy Spirit to work as effectively in our lives as He did in the lives of the early Christians. (cf. The Acts of the Apostles)

4. PENANCE (Reconciliation)

Jesus handed on to the Church the ministry of reconciliation.

Read II Corinthians 5:18-20

The Sacrament of Penance deals with the reality of sin – with our daily alienation from God, self, other individuals and the community. The Sacrament always has a communal dimension because our alienations always hurt not only ourselves and those from whom we are alienated but also the entire community. “If one member suffers all the members suffer with it.” (I Cor. 12:26) So the Sacrament of Penance celebrates our reconciliation with those from whom we are alienated and with the Church, which is hurt by that alienation.

The Scriptures are clear on how this reconciliation is to take place.

Read I JOHN 1:5-9

St. John begins by reminding us that we cannot compromise with sin. He also states that we are all sinners. The important point for St. John is that Jesus is the solution to our difficulties with sin. All we have to do is to “confess” our sins, be honest before God about our sin condition. We need to be honest with God about our attitudes, the direction our life is taking, etc., rather than about some shopping list of individual actions.



The net effect of the sacrament of Penance should be PEACE (reconciliation):

Read JOHN 20:19-23

The disciples first experience forgiveness and peace themselves – peace with God and with one another. Then Jesus sends them to bring that peace to others.

This peace is a harmony with God’s will for us, a harmony with the Church and a harmony with our brothers and sisters. It should ultimately give rise to good feelings about the other but it is much deeper than feelings. It is the peace that Jesus promised, which the world cannot give. (cf. John 14:27)

The Sacrament of Penance is one of the most important means of progressive conversion (metanoia), where we are assured of God’s forgiveness and given counsel and strength for continued growth.

(More will be said regarding the rite of Penance in the *Christian Life* talk).

5. ANOINTING OF THE SICK (Healing)

Jesus exercised a healing ministry:

Read MARK 1:32-34

– His ministry of healing was spiritual, mental and physical.

Jesus continues this ministry through the Church:

Read JAMES 5:14-15


What can we expect from the sacrament of Anointing?

- at times, restoration of physical health
- that the mind be relieved of anxiety, depression and fear
- that the person be strengthened spiritually – even find joy in suffering (cf. Col. 2:24)
- we ought to expect miracles of healing!

Anointing of the Sick is for all the seriously ill. We are being encouraged today to have all who are in any danger of death benefit from the sacrament; the aged, those who have chronic illness, those who have serious surgery, etc.

6. MARRIAGE (Covenant)

Scripture teaches that marriage is established by God as the sacred, life-long, covenant



relationship of a man and a woman, in which they fulfill each other and where their love gives birth to new life. Covenant, in contrast to contract involves giving of self unreservedly in love to the other.

Marriage is a sacrament because the spouses encounter the Risen Lord daily in their love for each other. This union of love is possible only if Jesus is their bond of unity. He can be that bond of unity only if both of their lives are centered on Him. The author of the letter to the Ephesians assumes that Jesus is the bond of unity in Ephesians 5:21. The verses which follow can be understood only in light of that mutual bond.

Read EPHESIANS 5:21-33

The Second Vatican Council referred to the family as the “domestic church.” In other words, the family should be a Christ-centered community of faith and love. Its priority should be to build up the Kingdom of God. In this way it is the basic Christian support community for all of us. All of us are related to some family and we must work with the other members to make it truly “domestic church.”

Marriage as a Sacrament is certainly impossible without Christ. There is much evidence in society today that any kind of stable union of husband and wife is most difficult, if not almost impossible, without Him. The Grace of the Sacrament alone can ensure fidelity to the marriage

covenant.

Christian couples are called to a unique form of witness. Their way of life is to be a sign of what the Church ought to be – a community in God’s love. Their fidelity is the strongest indication we have that the Christian life is possible in our world.

7. HOLY ORDERS (Spiritual Leadership)


All Christians have equal responsibility for the mission of the Church by Baptism. However, not all have the same function within that mission. The Church is a unity with diversity:

Read EPHESIANS 4:11-12

Ordained ministry ought not to be viewed as higher position but as a call to *serve* by continuing the spiritual leadership of Jesus:

- prophetic: teaching
- priestly: sanctifying
- building up the community
- as SERVANTS of the People of God

“A bishop marked with the fulness of the Sacrament of Orders, is the steward of the grace of



the supreme priesthood (Lumen Gentium 26) He is the principal ordained minister in a diocese and the source of all other ordained ministry. Priests are “prudent cooperators with the episcopal order” and “constitute one priesthood with their bishop.” (Op. cit. 28) Deacons work in communion with their bishop and his priests.

Read HEBREWS 5:1-4

- a human person
- who deals primarily with the sacred
- a sinner in constant need of salvation
- called by God and given a power (cf. I Tim. 4:14)

(The spiritual director should share what his ministry means to him).

Support your ordained ministers. Encourage them to be *spiritual leaders!*

8. EUCHARIST (Unity)

The Eucharist is the celebration of our covenant relationship with God and each other. “Thus the Eucharistic Action is the very heartbeat of the congregation of the faithful over which the priest presides.” (Presbyterorum Ordinis 5)

Eucharist was prefigured in the Old Testament:

Read EXODUS 24:4-8

- ratification of Sinai covenant in blood
- note the people's part

The people were unfaithful to that covenant. A new covenant was promised:

During His life on earth Jesus taught by word and deed what the New Covenant would mean. He established it through the paschal mysteries of His passage from death to risen life. He made it possible for us to enter more fully into the mystery of death to self and resurrection to new life in Him through our celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the ratification of our New Covenant with God, through Jesus and in His Spirit. This is evident from the earliest witness we have to the celebration of the Eucharist:

Read I CORINTHIANS 11:17-30

- we cannot celebrate the Eucharist worthily unless we are willing to live the new covenant and be united as God's People.

Our greatest assurance of our covenant relationship with God is Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist:



Read JOHN 6:54

Above all, it is in the Eucharistic Action that we encounter the Risen Lord. This is the point of St. Luke's beautiful account of the encounter at Emmaus:

Read LUKE 24:13-35

NOTES

OBSTACLES TO A LIFE OF GRACE (4)

Purpose and Setting

This is the fourth talk on the Second Day. It continues the *conversion* phase of the Cursillo by showing how the participants can overcome sin. The talk is primarily a positive presentation of the remedies for sin.

The talk begins by recognizing the reality of sin. We want the participants to be realistic about the practical problems they face, from within themselves, with others, and within society.

The talk discusses the most common influences which lead to sin. It does not attempt to be complete – simply to make the participants aware of the evil influences which are at work in their lives.

The most important part of the talk is the presentation of the remedies for sin: prayer, Sacrament of Penance, mortification, spiritual direction and Christian friendship. It is important to be very practical in presenting the remedies.

Duration: not more than one hour.

Outline

We have been discussing God's plan for our lives as progressive conversion – ongoing death and resurrection. We are always in the process. God invites us to an ever-deepening life in union with Him.

Read REVELATIONS 3:20/I THESSALONIANS 4:1

1. THE REALITY OF SIN

Obstacles to the life in grace cannot be from God. He offers grace freely to all. The obstacles are our refusals to accept His gift. The refusal to respond – to be available – is SIN. It can take the form of active rebellion or the form of passive indifference. Most of us are more guilty of the latter.

Sin presumes we know we are rebelling or being indifferent AND that we will to do so. It is not possible to fall from grace by accident. God is not just waiting to get us! Sin is a deliberate, free act. It is centering life on self rather than God. That is why St. Paul calls it self-indulgence (Gal. 5:16-18).

“The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) – spiritual death or separation from God. All sin separates from God totally or partially. It destroys or damages our relationship of love with Him. Sin is also alienation from self and others.

Some try to deny the reality of sin. They reduce it to socially unacceptable behavior. This is a logical conclusion for one who does not believe in a personal God.

The reality of sin is very evident in many happenings in our world.

The believer cannot deny the reality of sin. To do so is to suggest that God does not care how we live, that He did not create us with a purpose, that He does not love us. God did create us with a purpose – His will for us is very clear from several sources:

Conscience:
Word of God;
Teaching
of the Church;

ROMANS 2:15

JOHN 14:23

Vatican II - *Gaudium et Spes*

We are totally free only when we accept God's plan for us:


Read JOHN 8:31-32

The only effective way of dealing with evil is to break with it completely:

Read I JOHN 1:5-8

2. OCCASIONS OF SIN

If we are realistic about sin, we will want to avoid the occasions of sin; i.e., the influences leading us to sin:



WORLD: Read I JOHN 2:15-17

We must not be in love with the world for its own sake – materialism, lust for power, unjust domination of one person over another, etc. The Christian is called to reject these false values:

Read ROMANS 12:1-2

All creation is good. We sin by misusing creation. We are called to be stewards, co-creators with God. Our mission is to see that creation is used for the glory of God, which means, in the service of mankind.

As the Bishops' Synod of 1971 taught, there is no absolute right to private ownership. Our right to possess the goods of the earth in excess of what we need is subordinate to the right of others to the necessities of life.

We must be careful not to contribute to the evils built into the structures of our society:

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation. (Synod of Bishops, 1971)

It is important that we examine constantly our *life style* to be sure it is in harmony with the Gospel – simple and detached.

FLESH: Read ROMANS 7:15-19

By the flesh, we mean the internal forces seeking to control us – temptations resulting from our human nature. We will always experience this conflict no matter how spiritual we are. Jesus was tempted.

Temptation is not sin. It is the initial urge to do wrong. It becomes sin only when we desire that evil – when we choose against God.


We tend to pay attention to our more obvious sinful acts. We need to be more concerned with our sinful attitudes that can poison everything we do,: pride, false self-image, envy, hate, lust.

We deal with the flesh – these conflicts from within – by:

1. Acknowledging our tendency toward sin -- being honest about our sinful attitudes.

2. By claiming Jesus' victory over sin, as St. Paul does in:

Read ROMANS 7:24-25a



DEVIL: Read 1 PETER 5:7-8

For many, the devil is a joke or a fairy tale. Yet the Bible speaks clearly of very powerful, personal evil spirits, Christian tradition bears witness to the existence of real spiritual forces of evil, which seek to separate us from God. It is foolishness to pretend that these forces do not exist – witness the spiritualism in our society. However, we have no need to fear evil spirits as long as we trust in God for deliverance:

Read EPHESIANS 6:11-12

3. REMEDIES FOR SIN

a) Sacrament of Penance:

(Brief reminder of what has been said in *Sacraments*) In this Sacrament, we celebrate reconciliation with God and man. Its net effect is peace:

Read JOHN 20:19-23

If we celebrate this Sacrament sincerely, God not only forgives our sins, but He also works in our lives to remove the desire for sin. What is required of us is that we acknowledge our sinfulness and radically realize our need for God's mercy and healing:

Read I JOHN 1:9

b) Mortification:

Many try to manufacture odd mortifications. The essential mortification is dying to self and rising to God's will for us, that is, fulfilling our duties, accepting difficulties cheerfully, etc.

Read LUKE 9:23-26

This kind of mortification is positive — it sets us free.

It can include special acts of self-denial such as fasting, giving alms, caring for the sick, prayer, etc.

Read I CORINTHIANS 9:25-27

c) Prayer:

Jesus tells us to "watch and pray." We need a genuine effort to discern God's will for us. In prayer we try to be as fully present to God as we can be. Our attitude is: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening." (I Samuel 3:10)



For serious prayer we need to set aside a "quiet time" each day.

Read MATTHEW 6:5-6

(More will be said on how to pray in the *Christian Life* talk).

d) Spiritual Direction:

The spiritual director can help us to know God's will better. He is a wise (more than holy or learned) friend in the Lord who listens and helps us to be honest with ourselves and with God. Jesus helped many people in this way:

Read LUKE 10:25-37

It is important to have a spiritual director whom we visit regularly and with whom we discuss our efforts to grow in the Lord. Spiritual direction will not be very helpful if we seek it only in crisis situations.

d) Contact with other vital Christians:

Our world is hostile of indifferent to Christianity. We cannot survive in such a world without the support of a genuine Christian community:

Read HEBREWS 10:24-25

Jesus assures us that He is with such a community:

Read MATTHEW 19:20

4. CONCLUSION

The life of grace can be lived. It has been done and is being done by countless millions. The life of grace is possible because of Jesus' victory:

Read JOHN 16:33b

If we wish to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, all we have to do is to live in the victorious power of Jesus:

Read I JOHN 5:4-5

NOTES

Purpose and Setting

This is the second or third talk on the Third Day. Traditionally, it has been the second talk, following *Studying and Transforming the Environment* and preceding *Christian Community*. However, it may also be placed after *Christian Community*. There is some advantage to the latter placement since it compliments the rector's talk. Both set forth practical programs for the cursillistas.

This is the final talk by the spiritual director. While not neglecting the outline, the spiritual director should take advantage of this opportunity to clarify any points in the message of the weekend which remain unclear. To a great extent, this talk has to be prepared during the weekend so as to reflect the particular spirit of that Cursillo.

The talk is an important part of the *insertion phase* of the Cursillo. It ought to be very practical. It is intended to give the cursillista a practical program for spiritual growth. The emphasis is on prayer — liturgical, group, and personal. Where appropriate, reference should be made to the *Pilgrim's Guide* as a guide for continued growth after the Cursillo.

During the talk, the *Service Sheet* is distributed. The talk deals directly with only the Piety Section of the *Service Sheet*. However, the spiritual director explains that the cursillistas should make a commitment to a program of piety, study, and action; and that they will have an opportunity to review their commitment with one of the spiritual directors later in the day.

Duration: Not more than one hour.

Outline

This morning we have been challenged to penetrate our environment with the Gospel (by forming genuine Christian community in it). As we set out to do so, we should recall the words of the Second Vatican Council to the laity:

The success of the lay apostolate depends on the laity's living union with Christ. For the Lord has said: "He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit: for without me, you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

We will never be effective in penetrating our environments unless we are constantly in a process of progressive conversion — from self centeredness to Christ centeredness.

1. JESUS: SAVIOR AND LORD

Abiding in Jesus means for me having Jesus as my personal Savior and Lord:

Savior — I find PARDON in Him.

Read ROMANS 5:8-11

I can be certain of my salvation because of His unconditional love for me.

Lord – I find a **PURPOSE** in Him.

Read **MATTHEW 6:33**

I am achieving something significant by seeking the Kingdom – the most important thing. Therefore, I am not overwhelmed by the world's problems. (Give examples)

– I find **POWER** in Him.

Read **I CORINTHIANS 10:13**

I am never challenged beyond **HIS** strength in me. (Give examples)

– I find **PEACE** in Him.

Read **JOHN 14:27**

I find my peace in **HIM** today. (Give examples)
You should be at peace in Him now.

In short, for me there is only **ONE WAY**:



Read **JOHN 14:6**

After your Cursillo, you will be tempted to look for “easier” ways. There are none. We need to **take** Jesus as our:

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| WAY: | Action (serve) |
| TRUTH: | Study (know) |
| LIFE: | Piety (love) |

(At this point, the *Service Sheets* are distributed).

The *Service Sheet* you are receiving is to assist you in planning for continued growth through practices of piety, study of the Christian ideal, and apostolic action. During the quiet time after this talk, try to write on the *Service Sheet* your beginning commitment in these area. This commitment can be review later with one of the spiritual directors.

I am going to talk now in more detail about the practices of piety.

2. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

If we hope to continually deepen our union with God, it is essential to regularly check our priorities with a spiritual director. The general order of our priorities ought to be:

GOD:
VOCATION:
AVOCATION:
APOSTOLATE:

Time for God alone.
Family, priesthood, religious life, etc.
Work, ministry, etc.
Christian action beyond that required by our
vocation and avocation.

Our spiritual director is someone (not necessarily a priest) who is *wise* in spiritual matters and whom we can *trust* to guide us. He or she is not a “problem solver” or a “security blanket” for “clinging vines.” A good spiritual director simply helps us to be honest with ourselves and to discern accurately the will of God. Please refer later to page 116 and 117 of your *Pilgrim’s Guide*.

3. LITURGY

“Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the fountain from which all her power flows.” (Vatican II, S.C. 10)

- Our piety ought to be centered on the liturgy.
- Refer later to pages 13 through 18 of your *Pilgrim’s Guide*.

A. Eucharist

“Thus, the Eucharistic Action is the very heartbeat of the congregation of the faithful over

which the priest presides.” (Presbyterorum Ordinis 5)

The Eucharistic Action is the celebration of our covenant relationship with God and each other within the Christian community.

Read I CORINTHIANS 10:17

Our participation in the Eucharistic Action is the renewing of our commitment to live in unity with God and men. We should try to be part of this central action more often than just on Sundays. The Eucharist has serious consequences for daily living, as Paul explained to the Church in Corinth. (The spiritual director should speak of the importance of the Eucharist in his or her life).

Our greatest assurance of union with God is receiving Jesus in Holy Communion:

Read JOHN 6:52-54

B. Penance

This is the Sacrament of Reconciliation with God, with our brothers and sisters, and with others. It involves:

Contrition: Heartfelt sorrow and aversion for sin committed along with the intention of sinning no more. This is the most important act of the penitent.

Confession: Made in the light of God's mercy (Prodigal Son). We attempt to be honest before God about our sin condition, especially attitudes and motives.

Read I JOHN 1:9

Satisfaction: True Conversion (metanoia) includes satisfaction – amendment of conduct or reparation of injury.

Absolution: Pronouncement of God's forgiveness, preceded by counsel and assurance.

The Sacrament of Penance is one of the most important means of growth in union with God IF it is *sincere, open, and regular*. Please refer later to pages 39 and 40 of your *Pilgrim's Guide*.

A *daily examination of consciousness* of the presence of God in our lives helps us to live the reconciliation we celebrate in the Sacrament. Refer later to page 41 through 48 of your *Pilgrim's Guide*.

C. Marriage and Family



"The family is, so to speak, the domestic Church." (Vatican II, L.G. 11)

All of us are related to some family. It ought to be for us our primary support community for spiritual growth. We ought to be growing in the Lord with our family.

This is possible only if the family is truly Christ-centered. (EPHESIANS 5:21) Marriage and family are impossible unless Christ is at the center of the lives of the members. Making Christ central means making time for:

- Family devotion
- Family Christian learning
- Family action for Christ

4. PRAYER

Distinguish PRAYER and PRAYERS or prayer activity. PRAYER is communion with God – the natural expression of our relationship with God. PRAYERS or prayer activity lead to that communion. Refer later to pages 78-98 of your *Pilgrim's Guide*.

There are many approaches to praying. Each person must discover what is most appropriate for his or her growth. However, all prayer has certain common, basic elements:

Being Honest with God: Sharing myself in honest self-disclosure. This is how true interpersonal encounter begins - laying our true and naked feelings before Him.

Discerning-Listening: This is not looking for a message. It is becoming aware of God in our lives through the Scriptures. My method of discernment-listening is

Waiting: Prayer is the action of the Holy Spirit (ROMANS 8:26). So we wait in trustful expectation. We stand in readiness for encounter with God – allow Him to be present to us. This has been called: “Wasting time with God.” The measure of our prayer is the openness and emptiness of our human spirit.

Experiencing: Experiencing communion with God – “knowing Jesus.” (PHIL. 3:10) It is knowing that the Lord IS. This may come in an experience of utter loneliness, of total dependence, of great joy, of fulfillment.

At that moment, we experience communion with God.

We will not experience communion with God every time we pray. We will do so more often if we speak honestly, listen, and wait. Therefore, we need to plan a quiet time for prayer each day – 10 to 20 minutes for a start. Have a special place and aids to help you to listen.

The following approach to prayer has been helpful to many (The Four P’s of Prayer):



PASSAGE from Scripture: Pick one and have it marked and ready.

PLACE: where you can be alone and uninhibited in your responses to God’s presence.

POSTURE: relaxed and peaceful.

PRESENCE of God: be aware of it, acknowledge it and respond to it. If nothing happens turn to the **PASSAGE** from Scripture. Read it aloud very slowly and listen peacefully to it. Don’t be anxious. Don’t try to look for lessons or profound thoughts. Be content simply to be with God and to listen to Him. When you finish, remind yourself that God continues to live with you during the day.

(The spiritual director should witness to his or her own method and growth in prayer).

5. MARY

Devotion to Mary as taught by Vatican II is based on the Scriptures; i.e., that she is the mother of God. In no way is her role confused with that of Jesus. She is powerful to *intercede* for us. She is the first and the ideal Christian. Refer later to your *Pilgrim’s Guide*, Page 52.

6. CONCLUSION

“We have only just begun”

“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak . . . Watch and pray!” We need to plan for continued growth.

My prayer for you:

–That you can say, “I live, now not I, Christ lives in me.”

–If you have not already made this wonderful discovery, that you make it soon.

–If you have, that you grow in it.

(The spiritual director closes with prayer, such as:

EPHESIANS 3:14-21 OR PHIL. 3:7-16)

A period of silent reflection should follow the talk.



NOTES

PART IV

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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