

The Cursillo Path

— **RELATIONSHIP • EVANGELISM • RECONCILIATION** —

THE EPISCOPAL CURSILLO WEEKEND

CURSILLO — A MOVEMENT, A METHOD, AND A MINISTRY

Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry has powerfully reminded The Episcopal Church that it is a branch of the Jesus Movement. Within The Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry Committee oversees the Cursillo Movement. The Movement reaches out with a time-tested and proven Method for encouraging and equipping Christians to engage fully and faithfully in leading the Jesus Movement. This time-tested method is the Cursillo Method.

The Episcopal Cursillo Weekend is one part of the Method, which has three co-equal parts: Pre-Cursillo (time before the Weekend), the Weekend, and the Fourth Day (time after the Weekend).

THE WEEKEND'S PURPOSE

Since right after World War II, when Cursillo started as a movement within Roman Catholicism — later to be adopted by The Episcopal Church — the Cursillo Weekend has been a focal point of this effort to animate all God's people to take their places in the Church's apostolic ministry. The Weekend evolved over a period of years and developed from lived experience — encounters with both God and life — but it has been a central element of the Cursillo Movement from its inception and is an integral part of the Cursillo Method, which may be summed up as: "Being and doing the things that are fundamental to being a Christian." Another way to say this is this: "Cursillo seeks to enable us to live out our Baptismal Covenant."

Four aspects are fundamental to the Cursillo Weekend:

1. Encountering God, which entails encountering ourselves;
2. Developing a relationship with Christ;
3. Taking our place in a mutually-supportive community of brothers and sisters; and

WHAT IS A WEEKEND?

No matter how they are structured, weekends have become the days in our lives when we try to spend time away from our work routine and enjoy time with ourselves or our family. Today's schedules and demands often mean that this time to refresh is compressed and often does not even fall on Saturday and Sunday.

So it has become with the Episcopal Cursillo Weekend. Some diocese retain the traditional three-day schedule while others have adopted shortened schedules so as to respond to the special needs of their community.

This booklet will include some of the new and developing programs to support Cursillo and the Cursillo Method.

No matter what format is selected by a Cursillo Diocese, the goal of the Weekend schedule remains to create a time away. It is still a time to prepare for the Fourth Day. It is a time when the Holy Spirit is given a chance to enrich the lives of those who attend.

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4. Taking Apostolic responsibility for the world.

Since these four elements are fundamental to the Christian faith, the Weekend provides an occasion for a personal experience of each and of how each can happen in participant's lives beyond the Weekend. Far from being a pleasing production put on to impress and/or amuse participants, it is intended to focus on the miracle that is the Church, the body of Christ, and to make that wonder real by an experience of the Beloved Community gathered. The goal of the Weekend is this: to empower and equip Christians to go into the world to articulate God's dream for Creation, to witness to the life of grace in the Church, and to participate fully in the Jesus Movement. The Episcopal Cursillo Weekend is where the life of grace and the Cursillo Method become real and applicable in the lives of those who attend.

THE PRE-CURSILLO IN RELATION TO THE CURSILLO WEEKEND

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTS

The goal of the Church is to bring the world to Christ; that's why it can be described as the Jesus Movement. As part of the Jesus Movement, the purpose of Cursillo is to encourage and better enable Christians to influence the environments in which they live with the Gospel message. Environments are specific settings in which Christians find themselves with others. Environments include our home, our places of leisure, our workplaces, and our churches. Thus, the objective is to introduce the transformational power Christ Good News context.

Environments are so important that we must cautiously select them, taking care to match the challenges with the resources available. There is a tendency to try to engage too many environments at one time. Groups and individuals should carefully study their environments before selecting which one to approach and how.

SELECTING PARTICIPANTS IN THE WEEKEND **

Those who should attend a Cursillo Weekend should have the following characteristics:

- Have been Baptized (Confirmation is not necessary, but is indicative of an appropriate commitment to the Church);
- Worship in an Episcopal congregation or a congregation of a faith group in communion with the Episcopal Church (such a person's participation should be agreed to by the Bishops involved);
- Are living and deepening their Christian life;
- Have the potential to influence their environments;
- Are willing to participate in the Fourth Day; and
- Are not currently nor recently involved in a personal crisis. (Those who are, or have been through a difficult personal time should not normally attend a Weekend until life has returned to a better order.)

*** Some regions use the term "Candidate" and others use "Pilgrim," and still others use "New Cursillistas." The choice is up to the diocese. For consistency, "Candidate" is used here, but all three terms are appropriate.*

DEVELOPING SPONSORS

Sponsors are an important key to creating a joyful Cursillo Weekend and helping participants continue seamlessly into the Fourth Day. Secretariats are encouraged to organize sponsor workshops to foster more creative and dedicated sponsorship.

Sponsors should be prepared to:

- Answer any questions about the Weekend from prospective candidates;
- Be forthright with prospective candidates, informing them of the responsibilities and time commitments of Cursillo;
- Avoid secrecy — it is not part of the Cursillo Ministry;
- Have a plan to involve their candidates in post-Weekend, Fourth Day activities. Help them get into a Reunion Group, bring them to Ultreyas, and help them find a Spiritual Director.

NUMBERS MATTER

The number of team members will vary depending on the following: size of the facility, number of candidates, and local tradition. Care should be taken to maintain a ratio of candidates to those team members with whom they are to build community, such that the number of team members does not overwhelm the candidates.

LIVING WHAT WE PROCLAIM

Cursillo Weekends are not “put on;” they are lived. Therefore, leaders in the Cursillo community need to ensure that teams are made up of people who seek to live out their faith and witness.

Team members must be Cursillistas who:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of Group Reunion and Ultreya by being involved in a Group Reunion and Ultreya on a regular basis;
- Serve Christ and His Church in their environments ; and
- Care deeply that fellow Christians find their apostolic mission in the world

In the process of team formation, members grow very close to one another. This is the ideal, but teams need to guard against “in-grouping,” which means developing an “us-them” mentality. The process of team formation is not for the benefit of the team members but is primarily for the candidates on the Weekend.

As a general rule, people should not serve on more than one Cursillo team each year. As a corollary, people should not serve in the same capacity each time they are on a team. Membership on consecutive teams, especially in the same team position, can deny others the opportunity to share in the ministry and, worse yet, make the ministry stagnant.

TEAM STRUCTURE

The Cursillo Weekend is a living organism. Its parts are parts of a whole and reflect its functions.

The Cursillo Weekend has two primary leaders. A layperson serves in the position of Weekend Rector and is responsible for supervising the preparation and conduct of the Weekend. A member of the clergy fills the other position, Spiritual Advisor, and serves as the chief chaplain to everyone involved in the Weekend. Unless the Bishop directs otherwise, the Secretariat chooses the people who serve in both of these positions, and they, in turn, should begin their service as soon as possible by establishing a Group Reunion with each other.

The secondary leaders, who will also build community with the candidates during the Weekend, are the Assistant Rector(s), the Assistant Spiritual Advisor(s), the Music Leader(s) and the Table Leaders. Except for the Assistant Spiritual Advisor(s) whom the Spiritual Advisor chooses, the Weekend Rector chooses all of the secondary leaders. The process of selection, though, for these positions varies from diocese to diocese.

Other team members, who may have important roles in community building, include the Palanca team (which provide on-site prayer support for the Weekend participants), the logistics team (which sees that all supplies are available when needed and may also be members of the Palanca team), the kitchen team (which prepares meals in situations where the site does not provide food service), and the Fourth Day team (which serves as a liaison between the rest of the Weekend Team and the Cursillo Community). All of these leaders are part of the Cursillo Weekend. Each should be involved in community-building that takes place during team formation before the Episcopal Cursillo Weekend, so that, when the Weekend begins, a functioning Christian community welcomes the candidates.

The Weekend Rector and the Spiritual Advisor should both have considerable experience and gifts required for these positions. Other team members should also serve in positions which take into consideration their experience and gifts. And all should build on their experience with an eye to offering themselves for different roles in the future.

THE WEEKEND

THE MESSAGE

The message of the Three-Day Weekend is this: ***By virtue of our baptism, we share a call to be witnesses of new life in Christ.***

The Three-Day Weekend conveys the message in a variety of ways:

1. Connecting with Christ through sacraments and liturgy;
2. Meditations that call us to action as individuals and as community; and
3. Responding to talks and discovering in community our call to apostolic action

THE TALKS

Fifteen talks are given during the Weekend. The topic of each talk and who will be assigned to give the talk is given below:

1. IDEAL	Lay Person	9. OBSTACLES TO A LIFE OF GRACE	Spiritual
2. GRACE	Spiritual Advisor	10. LEADERS	Lay Person
3. LAITY	Lay Person	11. ENVIRONMENTS	Lay Person
4. FAITH	Spiritual Advisor	12. CHRISTIAN LIFE IN GRACE	Spiritual Advisor
5. PIETY	Lay Person	13. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION	Lay Person
6. STUDY	Lay Person	14. GROUP REUNION	Lay Person
7. SACRAMENTS	Spiritual Advisor	15. ULTREYA	Lay Person
8. ACTION	Lay Person		

These talks move in an orderly progression. They begin with basic issue "What does it mean to be a human being?" Then they move to what it means to be a Christian, what does it mean to live a life of grace, and what is the unique contribution of Cursillo, that is, the Group Reunion and Ultreya as a support to carry on and carry out ongoing, life-long witness.

An authentic Episcopal Cursillo Weekend includes only the foregoing fifteen talks. Any additions or variations should be carefully considered for fear of losing focus on the ultimate mission of Cursillo Ministry (i.e., preparation for the Fourth Day and participation in Jesus Movement. Some Cursillo communities, for example, have included entitled, "The Joy of Giving," or some similar title about the importance of support for the Church, the Weekend or the Cursillo Ministry. This topic is important, but such a talk detracts from the core message of the Weekend, which is not about money. There are other ways to address this important topic, such as a collection at Clausura, contributions taken up at diocesan Ultreyas, or sending a note home with the new Cursillistas about the joy of giving.

These are legitimate opportunities for local communities to be creative without compromising the integrity of the Weekend.

It is essential that the talks follow the outlines in the two Talk Workbooks. Experience shows that this structure works. The Workbooks provide plenty of opportunity for personal witness. Deviating from the outline affects not only that talk, but can affect other talks as well since they are interrelated. The message of the Weekend can be compromised if there is too much variance from the content of the talks.

THE MEDITATIONS

The meditations are five in number:

- 1) Know Yourself
- 2) The Prodigal Son or the Loving Father
- 3) The Three Glances of Christ
- 4) The Person of Christ
- 5) Message of Christ to the Participant

The meditations function to bring the participant into a living confrontation with the Christ of Scriptures. They are meant to be vivid presentations of Christ's call to each one to join Him in the work of being an apostle. For further information, see the *Clergy Talk Workbook*.

THE SCHEDULE ~ Traditional and Shortened

The long standing Cursillo practice has been to conduct Weekends using a Thursday through Sunday schedule. Following the ancient sundown to sundown tradition, this is called a Three Day Weekend. As



time has gone by, Cursillo retains its traditions and emphasis on the Cursillo Method. But, just as the Episcopal Church and churchgoers of today are different in practice than they were in the 1940's and 50's, the social and economic environment in which Cursillo functions today is also different. Therefore, to continue to meet the needs of different communities and generations, the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry also supports those who have prayerfully adapted their Cursillo Weekend schedules while retaining the core elements of the process — the talks, meditations, and worship.

A shortened format is being adopted by some Cursillo communities in order to provide an alternative for people who cannot participate in the longer schedule. This is a reflection of the need to reach ongoing generations to support a Church and Jesus Movement that looks toward the future.

Here is a suggested schedule that may be used in planning a Weekend using the **Traditional Three-Day Format**.

THURSDAY: The Retreat Phase

- 6:30 PM Registration
- 7:30 PM Welcome Talk – Introduction
- 8:15 PM The Retreat Meditation: “Know Yourself” Stations of the Cross
Meditation: “The Prodigal Son or the Loving Father”
- 9:15 PM Compline
- 10:00 PM Bedtime/Team Meeting

FRIDAY: The Proclamation Phase

- 7:00 AM Arise
- 7:30 AM Morning Prayer and the Meditation, “The Three Glances of Christ”
- 8:00 AM Eucharist
- 9:00 AM Breakfast
- 10:00 AM IDEAL Talk
- 10:20 AM Discussion of the Talk
- 10:50 AM Break
- 11:00 AM GRACE Talk
- 11:20 AM Discussion of the Talk
- 11:50 AM Lunch/Free Time
- 1:00 PM LAITY Talk
- 1:20 PM Discussion of the Talk
- 1:50 PM FAITH Talk
- 2:10 PM Discussion of the Talk
- 2:40 PM Break
- 2:50 PM PIETY Talk
- 3:10 PM Discussion of the Talk/Chapel Visit
- 4:30 PM Free Time
- 6:00 PM Supper
- 7:00 PM Table Sharing of the Day, Make Posters as Summaries of Talks
- 9:15 PM Compline
- 9:30 PM Free Time
- 10:00 PM Bedtime/Team Meeting

SATURDAY: The Conversion Phase

- 7:00 AM Arise
- 7:30 AM Morning Prayer and Meditation: “The Person of Christ”
- 8:00 AM Breakfast
- 8:30 AM STUDY Talk
- 8:50 AM Discussion of the Talk
- 9:20 AM Break
- 9:30 AM SACRAMENTS Talk
- 10:15 AM Discussion of the Talk
- 10:45 AM Holy Eucharist
- 12:00 Noon Lunch/Free Time
- 2:00 PM ACTION Talk
- 2:20 PM Discussion of the Talk
- 2:50 PM Break
- 3:00 PM OBSTACLES TO A LIFE OF GRACE Talk
- 3:30 PM Discussion of the Talk
- 4:00 PM Free Time

5:00 PM LEADERS Talk
 5:20 PM Discussion of the Talk
 5:50 PM Break
 6:00 PM Supper/Free Time
 7:30 PM Table Sharing of the Day
 9:45 PM Compline
 10:00 PM Free Time
 10:30 PM Bedtime/Team Meeting

SUNDAY: The Projection Phase

7:00 AM Arise
 7:30 AM Morning Prayers and the Meditation: "Christ's Message to the Participants"
 8:00 AM Breakfast/Free Time
 8:45 AM ENVIRONMENTS Talk
 9:05 AM Discussion of the Talk
 9:35 AM CHRISTIAN LIFE Talk (see note below)
 9:55 AM Discussion of the Talk
 10:25 AM Break
 10:35 AM CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION (see note below)
 10:55 AM Discussion of the Talk
 11:25 AM GROUP REUNION Talk
 11:40 AM Discussion of the Talk along with Group Reunion
 12:15 PM Lunch/Free Time
 1:30 PM ULTREYA Talk
 1:45 PM Discussion of the Talk
 2:15 PM Eucharist and Apostolic Commitment Service
 3:15 PM Free/Time and Preparation for Clausura
 4:00 PM CLAUSURA

Note: The order of the Christian Life talk and the Christian Community in Action talk may be reversed, if desired.

Here is an example schedule that may be used in planning a Weekend using the **Shortened Format**. Since it has not been in use for as long, Cursillo Diocese are still adjusting times. All are retaining the fifteen topics, but some are combining the presentation or discussion times. They are also carefully considering what extra activities they include.

FRIDAY - The Retreat Phase

6:00 PM Registration
 7:00 PM Welcome Talk – Introduction (time may include short break)
 7:45 PM Meditation: "Know Yourself" - silent reflection follows
 8:00 PM Stations of the Cross
 8:25 PM Meditation: "The Prodigal Son or the Loving Father" - silent reflection follows

The Proclamation Phase

8:40 PM IDEAL Talk
 9:15 PM Compline
 9:40 PM Bedtime for Candidates / Team Meeting
 10:00 PM Bedtime for Everyone

SATURDAY

6:45 AM Arise
 7:30 AM Holy Eucharist with the Meditation, "The Three Glances of Christ"
 8:10 AM Breakfast
 8:40 AM Assemble, Organize Tables, Sing
 9:15 AM GRACE Talk
 9:35 AM Discussion of the Talk
 9:45 AM LAITY Talk
 10:05 AM Discussion of the Talk
 10:15 AM Break
 10:30 AM FAITH Talk
 11:00 AM Explain Palanca - Read General Palanca and Distribute Personal Palanca
 12:00 PM Discussion of the FAITH Talk
 12:20 PM Lunch and Free Time
 1:40 PM Reassembly and Singing

2:00 PM PIETY Talk
2:20 PM Discussion of the Talk

The Conversion Phase

2:30 PM STUDY Talk
2:50 PM Discussion of the Talk
3:00 PM Break
3:15 PM SACRAMENTS Talk
3:35 PM Discussion of the Talk
3:45 PM ACTION Talk
4:05 PM Discussion of the Talk
4:15 PM Break and Free Time
5:00 PM Reassembly
5:15 PM Lay Rector Talk / Chapel Visit
5:40 PM Move to Dining Hall for Agape Meal / Free Time
7:00 PM Reassembly / Singing
7:45 PM Evening Activities / Talk Summaries at Tables / Skits / Posters / etc.
9:15 PM Compline with "The Person of Christ" meditation & Summary of the Day
10:00 PM Candidate Bedtime / Team Meeting
10:30 PM Bedtime for Everyone

SUNDAY

7:00 AM Arise
7:45 AM Morning Prayer and Meditation: "The Message of Christ"
8:30 AM Breakfast
9:05 AM Reassembly and singing
9:30 AM OBSTACLES TO A LIFE OF GRACE Talk
9:50 AM Discussion of the Talk
10:00 AM LEADERS Talk
10:20 AM Discussion of the Talk
10:30 AM Break

The Projection Phase

10:45 AM STUDY AND EVANGELIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTS
11:05 AM Discussion of the Talk
11:15 AM THE CHRISTIAN LIFE Talk
11:35 AM Discussion of the Talk
11:45 AM Lunch
12:50 PM Reassembly and singing
1:15 PM CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION Talk
1:35 PM Discussion of the Talk
1:45 PM GROUP REUNION Talk
2:05 PM Discussion of the Talk
2:15 PM Break
2:30 PM ULTREYA Talk
2:50 PM Discussion of the Talk
3:00 PM Individual Quiet Reflection on the Weekend
or Apostolic Commitment Service
3:30 PM Preparation for Closing
4:00 PM Closing and Eucharist
5:30 PM Pack Up and Team Dismissal

BEST PRACTICES FOR WEEKENDS

A PLACE OF JOY AND SPONTANEITY

The presentation of the Good News and the Cursillo Method is serious business, but because of the grace of God, it is joyful at heart. There must be room to allow the Holy Spirit to move and for spontaneity to break out. This is another reason the Weekend must not be cluttered with a variety of other activities.

Joy is shared, not created. The attitude of the team will foster an atmosphere in which genuine joy may emerge. It is not appropriate to manufacture entertaining activities to protect against the possibility there may be no "fun" on the Weekend.

As the team presents their talks, the clergy lead community celebrations, and musicians encourage singing, good humor and openness are appropriate. These will allow deep, surprising joy to become a reality.

Long stale talks, contrived surprises, and planned spontaneity are quickly recognized by the participants for their true nature. Team members and clergy need to live in the moment and be authentic, and the result will be enriching for everyone at the Weekend.

THE FLOW AND RHYTHM OF THE WEEKEND

Whether the Weekend utilized the original three-day schedule or shortened schedule, developing the message of Cursillo has a natural progression. A psychological and spiritual reality is that it takes time to build trust in each other, trust in the message, and trust in the Method. If the decision is made to use a shortened Weekend, thought must be given to insure that the message remains clear and that the participants still have time to reflect.

It is possible to break the Weekend into its parts, but the Weekend must be clearly understood as a whole. Dividing the schedule into phases is helpful, provided it is understood clearly that each phase is not complete in itself.

Friday, or the first gatherings, are called "The Proclamation Phase"; however, proclamation goes on throughout the entire Weekend. It is called by this name because the business of the first day is to proclaim the basis of the life of grace.

The first hours of the Weekend cover much that is already known to the candidates. The candidates, though, hear the message with fresh ears because of the cloistered setting of the Weekend, the presence of Christian community, and the power of prayer and the Holy Spirit.

Saturday or the middle hours are called "The Conversion Phase." Conversion is used here to imply a turning or returning to the roots of our Christian faith. The assumption of Cursillo is that Christians must be constantly involved in conversion.

Sunday or the final hours are called "The Projection Phase." Projection means communicating those ways which participants may be projected by the grace of God back into their normal lives with a sense of empowerment and mission.

The information about Cursillo given on Sunday is new to the candidates. The talks given on Sunday clearly describe the Cursillo Method and how the Method sharpens and clarifies various aspects of Christianity recalled during the first two days. *The foundation for each individual's successful Fourth Day are laid during this time.*

The three phases work together and enrich each other throughout the Weekend: calling, returning, renewing. Each part derives its meaning from the whole, even as the whole is built in parts. Each part is essential and necessary and cannot be overlooked. If a Weekend is being presented in a shortened format, team members will need to be conscious of each phase and help the Candidates understand the process through each phase.

FREE TIME

The schedule reflects the earliest Cursillo practice of providing ample free time for personal contact and reflection. There has been a tendency to overload the Weekend with activities (Reconciliation, Healing, Agape) thereby reducing the amount of free time given to the candidates. Some amount of free time is essential, for it provides a bit of relaxation and reflection during an already busy schedule. Remember

The Cursillo Method underlies the flow of the whole Weekend:

- ***The table discussions following each talk are really Group Reunions.***
- ***The evening gathering of the groups to share the meaning of each day is an image of Ultreya.***
- ***The talks and meditations challenge each person and, in turn, help the candidates explore their worlds and find new ways to relate the Gospel to their everyday lives.***
- ***The moments of free time are intended to help develop personal contact and build openness and confidence.***
- ***Prayer is the foundation of any Weekend and candidates are encouraged to pray with one another and for one another-- individually and corporately, extemporaneously and liturgically.***

that not everyone processes information in the same way. Allowing free time is more difficult when the schedule is shortened. This must be considered when choosing how time will be allotted.

The intention of the Ministry is to present what is essential during the Weekend. Therefore, a truly traditional Cursillo Weekend will consist of very few of the extra activities that are often added locally.

PALANCA?

Team leaders and Secretariat members need to be vigilant to ensure that Weekends are kept simple, normal, and natural. Weekends stand in danger of being deluged with gimmicks and hoopla.

Many Cursillistas go away from their Weekend with sacks of “goodies” which they have been taught to call “palanca.” First and foremost, palanca is the Spanish word for a lever or pry bar. It is a physical expression of prayer intended to lever, pry, or move the recipient to embrace the love of God and love from community during the Weekend. Above all, it is prayer. It is not a bag of “things.” What is essential to the success of any Weekend is prayer in all forms from concerned people. Prayer should be deep, intentional, and selfless. It is offered for the purpose of the candidates.

If the Weekend contains gimmicks, roosters, and skits, then the impression is created that Cursillo is really about these “things,” and some have come away thinking the Weekend was silly. This initial impression is compounded when candidates seek to pass this same kind of experience to others, and the Weekend gathers more and more accretions that are called “traditions.” The Weekend will be enriched by real palanca, which may include meaningful gifts, but even more includes personal prayers for the Candidates’ ongoing lives in Christ, by helping them to find tReunion Groups, or inviting them to attend Ultreyas.

FREEDOM TO EXPERIENCE THE WEEKEND

Each Weekend belongs individually to each Candidate. They are not required to experience or feel or develop according to the expectations of others. Candidates come to the Weekend freely looking for ways to enrich their Christian life. The Weekend will help them see that the way to be enriched is to be an enriching influence in their environments-- as apostles for Jesus Christ. The Weekend is freely given for the Candidates.

In some places, team members, either knowingly or unknowingly, apply pressure to have participants have a certain kind of experience during the Weekend. We must rely on the movement of the Holy Spirit for results and not on techniques and gimmicks. Candidates must be free to experience as much or as little as they can assimilate. They must not feel manipulated. Team members must be confident that as they proclaim and share what they have found by the grace of God, the message will be heard.

PERSONAL CONTACT

Personal contact is an important ministry for everyone involved in a Weekend. It consists of listening, inquiring, and confronting. Its motivating force is friendship and sincerity. It is summed up in the slogan “Make a friend, be a friend, and bring your friend to Christ.” As this is demonstrated during the Weekend, it will help those that attend adopt this slogan in their lives.

If a religious experience is a personal event, we all need individual help: thus one of the main functions common to the whole team is their openness to personal dialogue and sharing with the Candidates, acting as a renewing leaven. Personal contact is characterized by openness and dialogue. It consists of “tuning” into the individual and clearing the clutter around him/her so that God’s love can be seen and heard in fresh ways.

USING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

By design, the Prayer Book is not just a service book for use in church services. It is a wonderful resource for daily living as well. By using it for morning prayers and evening prayers, as well as other times during the Weekend, we help people explore its depths and find uses beyond the parish situation. The Book of Common Prayer is a “pilgrim’s guide.”

THE FOURTH DAY IN RELATION TO THE CURSILLO WEEKEND

LIVING IN THE FOURTH DAY

Everything that drives the Cursillo Ministry is focused on the Fourth Day. The Pre-Cursillo time looks at the environments to be exposed to the Gospel and identifies persons who can influence them.

The Weekend is a catalyst for awakening and equipping apostles. The Fourth Day is where the real action is and where the results of the previous efforts will show. The Weekend is a means to an end—the means to prepare Christians to better fulfill the Great Commission in their environments. Putting on a perfect Weekend is not the end objective, goal, or desired outcome. That's why a Diocese should have active Fourth Day activities for the Cursillistas.

The only thing which can sustain Christian witness is – Christian witness. Its not surprising that the only thing which can sustain Cursillo is also Christian witness. Christian witness is made possible by linking Christians together in small units to care and support one another. This is Group Reunion.

Ultreya is the bringing together of these small groups so that groups can enrich and challenge each other just as individuals do. The center of Ultraya is the Lay Witness talk where apostolic efforts using the Method are shared and the successes and struggles are lifted up as examples to all. (See ECM library booklet, *Ultreya*).

“Success breeds success.” This old saying holds true for the Cursillo Ministry. Persons who are engaged in apostolic action know the value of groups. Cursillistas engaged in individual and group witness know the power of the Three-Day Weekend to energize and activate apostles. Where these things are happening, the health and future of the Cursillo are assured.

GROUPS REUNIONS BRING THE CURSILLO METHOD TO LIFE

Grouping is essential to Cursillo. Cursillistas in the diocese and leaders of the Ministry should insist that Group Reunion be affirmed at every opportunity. Secretariats should group before meeting. Grouping should be a part of every Ultraya and Weekend Team meeting. The Rector and Spiritual Advisor and their assistants should be involved in grouping before team members are selected.

Grouping is not a mechanical act. The Group Reunion card provides a checklist to ensure that groups hold to the ideal. The inner essence is action – witness in the name of Christ. In addition to Group Reunions, Ultrayas also need attention. Ultrayas are not an attempt to return to the feelings of the Weekend. Ultrayas provide a cross fertilization of witness experiences from the Reunion groups as well as a special focus on the experiences of the witness speaker. A dynamic Ultraya will draw people despite the busyness of their lives and the distance that some may have to travel.

When Group Reunion and Ultraya are in place and functioning, there is a sense of authenticity or “realness” to the message of the Episcopal Cursillo Weekend. Cursillistas fresh from a Weekend should be linked to a functioning Group Reunion immediately. Sponsors should take this initiative. The Cursillista should be able to see the power of Group Reunion in the life of the sponsor. If a person who wants to be a sponsor is not willing to engage in grouping or willing to link a new Cursillista to a group, a different person should be found to sponsor the Candidate. If a new sponsor cannot be found, the Candidate should not be accepted for the Weekend.

A SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES FOR THE WEEKEND

Following certain general principles makes the Cursillo Weekend meaningful for candidates:

- *Bathe the weekend in prayer given by those within and outside the Diocese.*
- *Choose leaders and team members for the Weekend who use the Cursillo Method and realize the positive effects that it has in their faith journey and environments.*
- *Make sure that the team understands that the Cursillo Weekend is not an end in itself but a means for people to live an apostolic Fourth Day.*
- *Have the team live out the Cursillo Method during the Weekend which means developing a loving Christian Community, undergirding the Weekend in prayer, giving the days to the Holy Spirit to do the Spirit's work, and praising/thanking God for the Weekend and the many blessings that God has given us.*
- *Choose quality Candidates who fit the requirements and have sponsors who use the Method and will involve their Candidates in Fourth Day activities.*
- *Do not overload the Weekend with activities other than what is recommended. Remember this Method was developed and refined over a long period of time.*
- *Make sure that free time for reflection and fellowship is built into the Weekend.*
- *Remind the sponsors and the Cursillistas in the Community that Palanca should primarily be focused on what they have done for the Candidate in a spiritual sense, such as prayer, instead of some toy or gimmick.*

CONCLUSION

To be part of the Jesus Movement is a joy and a challenge, no matter in what circumstances we find ourselves. The issue is particularly urgent in the Episcopal Cursillo Weekend. Start now to pray for God's guidance in your local expression of Cursillo. Ask questions. Read all you can about this gift. Share your insights, discoveries, and vision. Live the Fourth Day. Serve where you can with your own authentic faith. Love Christ and your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Opportunities abound for witnessing to the grace of God and for assisting the Cursillo Ministry to be itself. When these opportunities arise, make the most of them. In sure and certain small steps, we make real progress on the long journey toward spiritual maturity. God willing, your efforts joined with those of many others will enable the Episcopal Cursillo Weekend, the Cursillo Ministry, and the Church to be a truly enriching part of all our lives.