



# Lay Talks ~ Sharing the Message

## SHARING THE MESSAGE

### THE TALKS / ROLLOS

The fifteen talks given during the Episcopal Cursillo Weekend are seen as really one talk in fifteen parts. These presentations are also referred to as Rollos and the presenters are called Rollistas. The use of these terms are at the discretion of each diocese and are used interchangeably in this booklet.

Each talk builds on the ones that precede it, and each one's message sets up the next one. The goal of the Weekend is for the hearers to be able to make sense of what they've heard so that they will go home with an understanding of the Cursillo Method that will inspire them to enter the Fourth Day. Thus, it is vitally important that each talk be prepared with that goal in mind.

### PREPARING A TALK

Preparing a talk requires a special kind of discipline and humility, because all the talks of the Weekend build upon one another, and introduce the candidates to one idea at a time. Since the tempo of the Weekend is built gradually, it is important that each talk make only the basic points covered in the outline for that talk.

Occasionally Rollistas giving some of the earlier talks are tempted to go beyond the outline, and end up previewing talks that follow. This should not happen, so that candidates are not confused, or fail to hear what is contained in the current talk. It is not what we say that is important, but the message of the whole weekend. The purpose of the Rollo is to inform and generate table discussion.

In summary:

- ❖ Do not worry about your ability to speak in front of groups. The best talks are often given by the people who are willing to share themselves by offering just the skills that they have. By worrying about whether one has the skills, it is possible to lose touch with what needs to be said.

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

The information in this booklet is designed to provide general outlines for the Talks presented during an Episcopal Cursillo Weekend. This is the fifth edition of this material and is the result of decades of dedicated work by the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry Committee and many Cursillo communities.

As the Ministry may have evolved in style and structure, the essential message has remained the same. As long as the key components of the Talks and Meditations are followed, the Cursillo Weekend will be an effective part of the Cursillo Method.

*Before beginning, it is important for each team member to fully understand the Cursillo Method and the role of the Weekend within the full process. Each should read: "What is Cursillo," "The Cursillo Path," and "Cursillo ~ Our Story." "Building the Path" and "Living in the Fourth Day" would also be helpful. These and other important booklets can be downloaded free from the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry website under the Publications and Resources tab ([episcopalcursilloministry.org](http://episcopalcursilloministry.org).)*

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- ❖ The talk outlines give the theme and major ideas which need to be presented. Develop that theme in your own way, and relate the ideas to the experiences of your own life in the Commentary on the Outline which concludes each talk outline.
- ❖ Do not worry about your ability to speak in front of groups. The best talks are often given by the people who are willing to share themselves by offering just the skills that they have. By worrying about whether one has the skills, it is possible to lose touch with what needs to be said.
- ❖ The talk outlines give the theme and major ideas which need to be presented. Develop that theme in your own way, and relate the ideas to the experiences of your own life in the Commentary on the Outline which concludes each talk outline.
- ❖ The most effective talks are variations on a theme with a logical progression. State the major idea at the beginning, build upon it, and keep coming back to it with different examples and ideas. The outlines will assist you in this process.
- ❖ Give personal witness to the extent that is appropriate for your talk. Be sure that your witness relates directly to the theme of the talk and serves to clarify a point, nothing more.
- ❖ If candidate selection has been done well, you will be speaking to persons of some Christian maturity. Try not to give them the impression that you have all the answers, or that they are there to “get the message.” This could easily turn them off.
- ❖ Except in the IDEAL talk, you may use quotes from the *Bible* or *Book of Common Prayer* when appropriate.
- ❖ Say as little as possible about previous Cursillo Weekends, and concentrate on the experience of this Weekend.
- ❖ Be as specific as possible in your examples, and avoid broad general statements.
- ❖ Serious study should go into the preparation of a talk. It may be helpful to seek information and ideas from clergy, other Cursillistas, books and periodicals. Use sources which are current and relate to the theme of the talk.

When using examples in a talk, be careful to choose ones that highlight your points. A speaker can make one point and then unintentionally make another point with the example used. Listeners often remember the examples more vividly than the ideas, so the speaker needs to carefully select the ones that best illustrate the points.

Like the talks, examples fall into a progression through the Weekend. At first, we are learning what it means to be a Christian. The points made in these talks are best illustrated by stories, comparisons, and incidents which make those ideas clearer. Don't urge the candidates to take action, and don't go into how things ought to be done. In the next phase, when we learn about those things which help us to become more effective Christians, use examples that aim at how Piety, Study, and Action work. At the last, when the picture of Christian community is presented, use examples that offer glimpses of real Christian communities in action.

The talks of the Weekend are planned so that the message of God's love and our need to respond to it as apostles unfold gradually. We want the candidates to be able to grasp the message of each talk, so that they will understand the whole message. Furthermore, as we get to know the candidates, they will learn more and more to trust not only the message, but also the messenger. When they come to realize that we not only believe this message, but try to live it, they will want to experience it for themselves. This gradual unfolding of ourselves and the message is the gentlest and surest way to share both ourselves and the Lord with the candidates.

## **TECHNIQUES FOR TALK DELIVERY**

The most important aspect of public speaking is believability. If the content of the message is to be heard, remembered and appreciated, the audience must be convinced that the speaker believes it. Thus, it is important that the speaker become completely familiar with the talk and what it says.

A second point is to not make the talk either too brief or too lengthy. Cover the topic thoroughly and use examples to illustrate. However, a point once made should lead to the next one, and not dwelled upon for too long. If you write the talk early enough, there will be ample time left for learning and revising it. The topic and the Weekend format being used will effect the talk length as well. Consult the team leadership for time guidelines.

Third, practice the talk to yourself and with others; in rehearsal you will learn it, you will know its length, and you will be more and more confident in your delivery.

## MORE SUGGESTIONS FOR DELIVERY

- Dress comfortably, for both your physical appearance and your confidence. Sometimes certain clothing (of yours) will add to your comfort and your confidence.
- A proper stance and body language is important. Stand erect, and make eye contact everywhere in the room. Smile at your audience; you'll be amazed at how much that will help you! These people are your friends, and they want to hear what you have to say. Take a deep breath before you begin. Then, let God help you give your best talk.
- Speak to the back of the room — that way everyone will be able to hear you. Speak slowly enough for your message to be understood. Occasionally raise or lower your voice for emphasis and a change of pace. This will keep the audience alert.
- Facial expressions and gestures can often help convey principal points.
- Pay attention to your audience. Watch their facial expressions and body language. If they appear tired or fidgety, you may want to make your talk livelier by changing intonation or by changing your body language, to bring them back. Remember: they are your friends.
- Distractions, such as closing doors, voices outside the room, or coughing, frequently occur during someone's talk. If you fail to let them annoy you, or even make light of them with the audience, your talk will not be interrupted, and the hearers will continue to get the message of your talk.
- Pray before your talk. You are giving it for God, and God will help you to feel good about it.
- Be yourself. Know that Christ is counting on you, and you on Him.

## LAY TALK OUTLINES

Each talk is listed in order of presentation. Some dioceses have adopted alternate titles for several talks, but the materials remain the same. Some dioceses — especially those using shortened formats — have combined some topics. This should be done with care so that major points are not lost. To provide context for all talks, those presented by clergy are summarized and included in order of presentation.

The length of each talk (generally between 15 to 20 minutes) may vary according to the topic and Weekend format being used. Each presenter should consult with the Weekend leadership for the optimum length for their talk.

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### TALK #1 — IDEAL — LAY PERSON

#### PURPOSE:

- ❖ This talk is intended to begin the search for meaning which will continue through the Weekend and into the Fourth Day.

#### CORE IDEAS:

- ❖ All people live by ideals, this is what motivates them.
- ❖ We need to know our ideals.
- ❖ We can discover our ideals by discovering where our time, money, and thoughts go.

#### INTRODUCTION:

- ❖ Intelligence, will and freedom distinguish human beings from the animals.

- ❖ Human beings are unique in creation because our lives are motivated by ideals; our lives have a purpose.

#### ***WHAT IS AN IDEAL?***

- ❖ An ideal is a combination of ideas, hopes and preferences which inspire and motivate people.
- ❖ An attractive ideal motivates us to work to attain it.
- ❖ Each of us has *one* ideal, not many: all of our life goals and objectives stem from our striving for our one ideal.
- ❖ Our ideal represents our values.
  - Part of being human is to move toward something worthwhile.
  - What is really worth working for?

#### ***THE NECESSITY OF AN IDEAL IN LIFE***

- ❖ There is no such thing as human life without an ideal.
- ❖ Everyone has an ideal, or he or she is not fully human.
- ❖ Our ideal shapes and characterizes our whole life. Our individual ideal makes us what we are.
- ❖ The higher our ideal, the more fully human we are. A man or woman's ideal shows us what kind of person he or she is.

#### ***THE INFLUENCE OF THE IDEAL ON LIFE***

- ❖ Ideals give life purpose and meaning.
- ❖ Ideals give us enthusiasm for our work.
- ❖ Ideals shape our personality.
- ❖ Ideals shape human history.

(This section offers opportunity for historical or personal examples which may illustrate how ideals change.)

#### ***QUALITIES OF AN AUTHENTIC IDEAL***

- ❖ An ideal should be high; we should aspire to greatness.
- ❖ An ideal should be attainable.

#### ***BARRIERS TO DISCOVERING AND REALIZING OUR IDEALS***

- ❖ Impatience
- ❖ Poor priorities
- ❖ Discouragement from others.
- ❖ Fear (of failure)

#### ***KINDS OF IDEALS***

- ❖ There are as many ideals as there are individuals. Some people are not sure what their own ideal is.
- ❖ There are personal, family, group, national, and universal ideals.
- ❖ There are many categories of ideals: wealth, science, glory, fame, honor...

#### ***NECESSITY OF KNOWING OUR IDEAL***

- ❖ What is your ideal? You have one, whether you realize it or not, because it guides your life.
- ❖ To discover your ideal, ask yourself: "Where do my thoughts, my free time, and my money go?" (This may be another opportunity to share personal examples of an ideal.)
- ❖ To discover your ideal today, look at your calendar, your checkbook register and your spiritual journal or diary.

## **COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE**

By this time in the weekend the candidates are encountering themselves. The retreat phase of the weekend has allowed them to ponder their past: fears, sins, hopes, accomplishments and failures. Hopefully, the desire to become something more is beginning to blossom in them. This talk is intended to begin the search for meaning which will continue through the weekend and into the Fourth Day.

The group “ritual” – the Weekend pattern of listening to talks, reflecting on talks, and summarizing talks – has not yet been established. It will be the end of the day before the participants will begin to feel at home, so the Ideal talk is not intended to overwhelm or dazzle, but to steadily and gently point the way. The presentation should be inviting, warm, relaxing and familiar.

At the same time, this talk does not mention God, Jesus Christ, or anything which relates directly to religion. It is intended to prepare the ground for the Christian message. The talk appeals primarily to the mind. It attempts to capture the candidates’ interest. It should arouse interest in finding one’s ideal and perhaps looking for a better one. Examples should inspire, but not overwhelm your listeners.

### *Suggestions for further reading:*

Let Your Life Speak, Parker Palmer (esp. Chapters 1&2)

Wishful Thinking, Frederick Buechner (esp. p.118)

### *Relevant background scripture:*

Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 13:11-12; 1 Thess. 5:21

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## **TALK #2 — GRACE — SPIRITUAL ADVISOR**

Life in grace is the Christian ideal. Grace is the free gift of God — “God’s favor towards us, unearned and undeserved” (BCP, p. 858). Life in grace results from a personal relationship with God. Grace is not a “thing” God gives us, but it is an integral part of our ongoing relationship with God.

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## **TALK #3 — LAITY — LAY PERSON**

### **PURPOSE:**

- ❖ This talk is intended to help the candidates realize how essential they are to the life and ministry of the Church in the world.

### **CORE IDEAS:**

- ❖ The layperson is the church in the world
- ❖ The church is the community of those who live in Grace, and is a channel of Grace in the world
- ❖ We develop and grow in relationship with God and with others.
- ❖ Each of us has a mission in the world; we are called to be apostles.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- ❖ There is a deep spiritual hunger in the world.
  - There is a need for healing
  - There is a need for belonging (Personal examples of how I came to my church could be used here)
- ❖ We have found healing and belonging in Christ
- ❖ The church is the whole community of those who are in union with Christ

- ❖ The church is the Body of Christ, and each person in the church is a part of that Body. (Ephesians 4:11-12, Romans 12:4,5)
- ❖ The church is a visible organization with laity, bishops, priests and deacons

#### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF LAITY IN THE CHURCH?

- ❖ All of us: laypersons, religious, deacons, priests and bishops are ministers of the church.
- ❖ From the Book of Common Prayer, page 855: “The ministry of laypersons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship and governance of the Church.”
- ❖ The lay person has a mission because he or she is baptized, and because Christ has commanded us to love one another.
  - The clergy teach, preach and govern; they are the ministers of word and sacraments
  - Laity are witnesses to Christ and bring him into the world.
  - When clergy and laity are following their call, the church can evangelize and Christianize the world.
- ❖ All laity are called to the ministry of witness and reconciliation. (2 Cor.5:17-20)
  - To tell the story of Christ and confess their faith when appropriate (Romans 10:10)
  - To claim our place as a member of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19-22)
  - To lead others to reconciliation in Christ, knowing that Christ is with us in our work as laity (Matthew 28:19-20)

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAYPERSON’S MISSION:

- ❖ Lay people are active in the real world.
  - They live and work in the world; they bring Christ into their world. (John 17:20-23)
  - They live ordinary lives. The more they are intimately connected with their environment, the greater their potential to influence it.
  - They do not compete with ordained persons in bringing Christ to the world, but work along with them.
  - Holiness implies “being set aside” for God’s work. All laity are holy. (Ephesians 1:3-6)
- ❖ God works through us to bring his kingdom to the world. We are called to be apostles in our everyday lives: (A personal example?)
  - Telling others of the truth we know.
  - Working to love and help others. (James 2:17-18)
- ❖ Relationship between clergy and laity
  - Ordained people teach, govern, and administer the sacraments.
  - Lay people take initiative; they too have an active role in the church. They are the source of new life, new directions and reevaluation.
  - Lay people can go places clergy cannot go, and minister to persons clergy cannot reach.
  - When laity and clergy work together, the whole church is unified, and her mission can be accomplished. (Galatians 3:27-28)

#### CONCLUSION

Every layperson has a unique mission which no one else can fill. For some people in the world, Christ can only be found through me. (“I may be the best Christian some people know. I may be the only bible some people read. I may be the only image of Jesus some people encounter.”)

#### COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE

By this time in the weekend, the candidates are beginning to become more comfortable with the “listen-consider-discuss and summarize” pattern of the day. It is still too early to urge the candidates to action.

The important thing is to help them realize how essential they are to the life and ministry of the church in the world.

It is not yet time for emotional personal witness although it is appropriate to utilize personal examples of how God has called you or others in your church to serve as a member of the laity. While church participation (lay reader, altar guild, etc.) is important, the best examples include ways in which the laity reach out to bring Christ to a hurting world. (For example, participation in soup kitchens, prison ministry, hospital visitation, home visitation and the like) However, these examples are best if kept low-key and practical.

*Suggested Readings:*

Going Home, The Most Rev. Frank Griswold

Life of the Beloved, Henri Nouwen

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## **TALK #4 — FAITH — SPIRITUAL ADVISOR**

Faith is saying “yes” to God’s revelation: wanting our lives to be lived God’s way, and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit which empowers us to give ourselves fully to God’s will. By faith we become members of the Body of Christ and are organically connected to God — “that we may be one.” Faith is the response to God’s plan of salvation: through grace, God enters into those who accept the God’s plan of salvation for them. Palanca is distributed following this talk. This provides evidence that the Cursillo Ministry relies on the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit, and bears witness to the fact that the Spirit is alive and active in the community of believers.

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## **TALK #5 — PIETY — LAY PERSON**

### PURPOSE:

This talk is intended to offer a living witness to a life of grace. The candidates learn that living life as a committed Christian is something available to all, with the Grace of God.

### CORE IDEAS:

- ❖ Our life in Christ is a covenant of love.
- ❖ God wants to be in relationship with us.
- ❖ Piety is living a life of grace in a conscious, growing and shared manner.
- ❖ The practice of piety is an intentional process of spending time with God.

### INTRODUCTION:

- ❖ What is piety?
  - Piety is faithfulness to God as a fundamental part of our life in grace.
  - Piety is a **covenant relationship** — like a marriage — promising mutual faithfulness (Eph. 5:31-32). We now know of God’s deep love for us; piety addresses our love for God. Will we love God back?
  - Piety requires consent from us to allow God into all aspects of our lives.
  - Piety calls us to a new life (paradigm shift) in which our relationships with ourselves, with God, and with the world are redefined by our love for God and God’s love for us.
- ❖ Piety, Study and Action are the three elements necessary to grow spiritually and to reach out to change the world in Christ’s name.
- ❖ What piety is not (those false conceptions of ‘being pious’):

- Practicing outward signs of religiosity so that they may be seen by others,
- Outdoing our neighbor in ‘doing good’ so that we might feel ‘safe’ (e.g. The ‘Church Lady’ on *Saturday Night Live*),
- Following the routines of faith solely out of a sense of duty or fear of punishment,
- Hypocrisy, ‘wearing a mask’ of holiness in order to keep God and others away, or
- Separating ourselves from the world in order that we might stay ‘pure’.

#### GENUINE PIETY:

Genuine piety arises out of a deep love for God and a recognition of God’s deep love for us. Our whole lives are oriented toward living for God (Col. 3:17, Psalm 63:1-8).

- ❖ Our deep love for God in Christ directs our daily choices. Our Ideal is to live our lives for God.
- ❖ God invites us into a mutual, covenantal relationship. “The transaction of that covenant is that of espousals to Christ; on our part, it is giving our souls to Christ as his spouse.” (*Complete Works of Jonathan Edwards*, p. 443)
- ❖ God is real and cares for me specifically — my Father, Creator, my Lord and Savior truly loves me, and wants my life to be lived for God’s glory.
- ❖ Piety guides our lives in Christ.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRACTICE OF PIETY:

- ❖ Piety is to be practiced by laypersons as well as clergy. Normal life in everyday surroundings can still be a life of piety. One does not have to become a nun or monk.
- ❖ The practice of piety is natural. As persons in deep relationship with Christ, we become MORE ourselves, not less. We speak honestly and naturally about how God is at work in our lives, and how God helps us to become what God intended us to be.
- ❖ The practice of piety is courageous. In spite of our fears of rejection, we tell our stories to those who seek to know what God is doing in our lives.
- ❖ The practice of piety helps our relationship with God grow in strength and maturity. Living a life of piety leads us to a fuller expression of ourselves and our faith.
- ❖ The practice of piety promotes joy and peace in our lives. We depend on the “peace of God which surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7, Gal.5:22, 2 Cor. 1:24, Rom. 14:17; 15:13).
- ❖ The practice of piety is intentional. We are purposeful in our regular interaction with God.

#### PERSONAL TESTIMONY:

Although some aspects of personal witness may have already been used, this is the appropriate point for the speaker to turn to his/her own personal testimony. This is the speaker’s opportunity to give a life example of what it means to live a life of grace. The speaker is encouraged to include the following:

- ❖ The condition of the speaker before he/she came to direct his/her life to God,
- ❖ How the change came, how Christ became one’s Ideal, who helped the change occur. (The change was not necessarily dramatic, because directing one’s life to God is usually a process. Over-dramatization here may detract from the main point.)
- ❖ What life with Christ means to him/her now. (It’s okay for committed Christians to struggle with the day to day problems of life.)
- ❖ A witness to the speaker’s new life. (Focus on what God has done in and through the speaker. Give thanks for the positive changes.)
- ❖ A description of the reorientation of the speaker’s relationship with God (All the problems of life are not solved, but somehow God is in the midst of every aspect of life. ‘Things are different now.’)

#### ELEMENTS OF PIETY (These may be incorporated into the Personal Testimony):

- ❖ Briefly list some practices of piety, especially those that feed you (e.g. personal prayer, daily office, Eucharist, spiritual direction, group reunion, retreat, meditation, etc.). Remember that a detailed discussion of the practices of piety will be offered in the “Christian Life” talk.

- ❖ The practices of piety are not the life of grace, but are necessary to sustain it. We recognize our love for God and God's love for us and we celebrate that mutual relationship in our practices of piety.
- ❖ Our mutual love relationship with God does not depend on how we feel at a given moment, but on our regular, intentional practice of piety as a reminder of God's involvement in our daily lives. The Alcoholics Anonymous community uses the phrase "Fake it 'til you make it," to describe the necessity to persevere in our relationship with God even when we do not feel God's immediate presence.

#### CONCLUSION:

Our regular practice of piety will lead us to want to know more about God (Study), and to serve others and to lead them to God (Action), which in turn will deepen our love and commitment to God (Piety).

#### COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

This is the last talk of the first day. At this point in the weekend, candidates have likely been introduced to palanca as a reminder of God's love for them. The Piety talk summarizes all the previous talks and takes the first step in moving the candidates toward an apostolic outlook – a knowledge that we are 'sent' out into the world in love.

This is the first 'witness talk', the first opportunity for the speaker to 'tell it all' with regard to their faith journey. The hope is that the candidates come to understand that God accepts them wherever they are in their walk with Christ and will lead them on the rest of the journey. Speakers who give this talk are encouraged to be honest about how they (and all of us) may have avoided relationships with Christ and how God changed their hearts and gave them the courage to give their all to God.

This talk is intended to introduce a positive vision of what piety is for us as active, committed Christians. The details of the practices of piety will be discussed in the "Christian Life" talk (#12).

#### Suggested Readings:

- Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis
- Wisdom Distilled from the Daily*, Joan Chittister, OSB
- Amazing Grace*, Kathleen Norris
- Practicing the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence
- What's so Amazing About Grace?*, Philip Yancy

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## TALK #6 — STUDY — LAY PERSON

#### PURPOSE:

This talk is intended to encourage candidates to a life of study as a means of giving depth and strength to our faith. It points out the need for growth in our Christian life (Hebrews 5:12-14).

#### CORE IDEAS:

- ❖ We are called to grow in our life of grace (Piety).
- ❖ We use our minds, as well as our hearts and souls, to learn how to be Christians.
- ❖ In study we seek to hear God speaking to us.
- ❖ Study aids our growth in Christ and moves us into action in the world.
- ❖ Our Piety calls us to Study, our growth in Christ leads us into Action

#### INTRODUCTION:

- ❖ We are created to give ourselves to Christ: our hearts (Piety), our wills (Action), and our minds (Study) (Prov. 8:10ff, **Rom. 12:1-2**, Rom. 15:14).
- ❖ Study is the application and use of our minds to learn. In our faith, study and piety prepare us for action guided by the Christian ideal.

## THE NEED FOR STUDY

- ❖ Christianity involves all of life, and gives our lives meaning and purpose.
- ❖ Our faith in Christ is more than devotional practices – it is a way of life.
- ❖ Through study we come to a deeper understanding of our Christian faith.
  - Our faith is active and organic -- we grow and mature in our faith in order to be transformed by God. Our transformation helps us to transform the world.
  - Christians are agents of change in the world, our study helps us see those places where Christ's light can bring healing and love (Philippians 2:5, 4:8).
  - Christians are active participants in the world. The life of Jesus is an example of how we are called to live in the world and faithfully to serve God's will for our lives.
  - Our foundational book for study is the Bible. Our foundational story of faith is the story of Jesus. There are also many gifted writers who can lead us deeper in our journey of faith. Consult with your priest, your spiritual director, or a trusted Christian friend for suggestions.
  - Study includes more than written materials (e.g. video tapes, audio tapes, observation of our environments, retreats and seminars).
- ❖ Study strengthens our love of God in Christ Jesus by helping us to understand:
  - God's self-revelation in scripture and in nature,
  - Our relationship with God and God's creation,
  - Who we are and what God is calling us to become.

## THE LAYPERSON AND STUDY:

- ❖ We study in order to understand what it is to be a Christian.
- ❖ Study helps to make our lives in grace intentional.
- ❖ As we grow and mature in life, we also are encouraged to grow and mature in our understanding of Christ and Christianity. We are called by God to move away from an underdeveloped faith into a more mature faith (I Cor. 13:11).

## THE PURPOSE OF STUDY:

- ❖ Study allows God to speak to us as we deal with the issues and obstacles of life (Hebrews 1:1-2).
- ❖ Study is a means to holiness. It gives a Christian form to our life (II Tim. 3:16-17).

## OBSTACLES:

- ❖ A lack of self-discipline: We will probably have to give up certain activities in order to make time for study.
- ❖ A lack of understanding: Alternate translations of scripture and/or bible commentaries can help open the scriptures up to our fuller understanding.
- ❖ A lack of humility: Few of us like to admit how much we do not know.
- ❖ Fear: Some of us are afraid of what we might discover as we study. We fear that God may ask us to do something we would be reluctant to do. We might discover truths about ourselves that would be difficult to admit.

## REMEDIES:

- ❖ Courage: In spite of our fear we allow God to speak to us in our studies, trusting that God's word will 'set us free' and make us whole rather than diminish us (John 8:31-32).
- ❖ Persevere: We keep moving towards the goal of regular study, even though we fall short (Hebrews 12:1-2; Luke 11:9ff).
- ❖ Humility: We let God be in charge, surrendering our will to God's will (Luke 9:23-25).
- ❖ We trust God's timing.

## CONCLUSION:

Study is an ongoing process of growth in Christ. We never stop learning in our faith, and our learning leads us to deeper holiness. (Ephesians 1:17-19)

## COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

This is the first talk of the second day and begins the ‘conversion’ phase of the weekend. (See *The Flow of the Episcopal Cursillo Weekend Message* for further details.) The candidates are now getting to know each other and beginning to trust each other. The morning meditation attempts to introduce the candidates to Jesus as a person with whom they can connect. The Study talk begins the process of answering the question, “What should we do?” (Acts 2:37) his talk is best kept clear, practical and explanatory. Good, concrete examples are highly recommended.

Study is the second leg of the tripod of Piety, Study, and Action. It is intended that the weekend up to this point will have led the candidates to want to know God more fully. The study talk is the first time they are offered an opportunity for an active response, and a concrete plan for growth in their Christian faith. Thus, the talk need not be overly scholarly, but instead, a practical and attractive invitation to learning about our God in Christ. The talk is intended to impart hope to the candidates that they will be able to live a life of study.

### Suggested Readings:

*Harper’s Bible Commentary* (A good one volume commentary)

*The Life Application Bible* (Available in NIV, and contains a “running” commentary in the footnotes)

*The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (For those who are more “scholarly” and like to follow up on references)

*The Message*, a bible translation by Eugene Peterson

*(The speaker might plan in advance to have his/her favorite books available to the candidates after the talk (perhaps a “book table”). A list of helpful web sites and blogs would also be helpful. The speaker might also invite the rest of the team members to place offerings on that “book table” so that a larger representation of possible study sources might be offered. The Spiritual Director or Secretariat may want to review the books offered in advance. Some dioceses provide a list of suggested basic readings.)*

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## TALK #7 — SACRAMENTS — SPIRITUAL ADVISOR

It is possible to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We encounter Christ through the sacraments. This talk does not dwell on the technical details of each sacrament, but on Christ’s presence in them. The Eucharist is presented as the most vivid example of Christ’s presence. This is most effective when it contains witness by the spiritual advisor as to how Jesus touches people through the sacraments.

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## TALK #8 — ACTION — LAY PERSON

### PURPOSE:

- ❖ This talk is intended to encourage the candidates to reach out to others in the name of Christ that they might draw others to Jesus Christ. It emphasizes how living as Christians, Christian Action is our natural form of our action. Our action naturally flows out of our deep love for Jesus Christ. The speaker is encouraged to use examples from personal experience and that of others throughout the talk.

## CORE IDEAS:

- ❖ Piety is active and alive. A living piety translates into action.
- ❖ Bringing others to Christ is central to the mission of the Church. (Mt. 28:19-20, AKA “The Great Commission”)
- ❖ The persons we are most likely to influence are those with whom we share common interests.
- ❖ Christian action is natural, “Make a friend, be a friend, bring your friend to Christ.”
- ❖ Christian action is a part of our baptismal covenant. (Book of Common Prayer, p.305)

## INTRODUCTION:

- ❖ The Christian life can be characterized by a tripod or three-legged stool. The three legs are Piety, Study and Action. All three aspects of the Christian life are equally important to successful living as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ The sacraments, regular worship (forms of piety) and our study are intended to feed and nourish us in preparation for Christian action.
- ❖ Christian life is friendship with Christ; we want to share this friend with others.
- ❖ Action is our opportunity to share and spread the life of grace to others. (James 2:14-17)
- ❖ The word “apostle” means “one who is sent.” Apostolic action implies that we are sent by God to perform Christian action in the world.

## THE NEED FOR APOSTOLIC ACTION

- ❖ We need apostolic action.
  - Without action our Christian life is incomplete.
  - Action promotes Christian growth.
  - Practicing and speaking our faith helps us develop as Christians.
- ❖ The world needs apostolic action.
  - Christians are called to be leaven, yeast, bringing life to the world.
  - Evil in the world can be transformed by Christian action.
- ❖ The Church’s mission depends on our action as members of the Body of Christ
  - We are sent into the world to “represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever [we] may be; and...to carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world.” (BCP, p. 855)
  - We are called by the gospel to “make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:19) that the Church might be found everywhere.

## THE OBLIGATION OF ACTION:

Our call to action is a direct result of the following:

- ❖ Our baptism. (“Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?” BCP, p.305)
- ❖ Our confirmation. (“Send them forth in the power of that Spirit to perform the service you set before them...” BCP, p. 418)
- ❖ Our membership in the Body of Christ. (I Cor. 1:26-31; 12:12-13)

## THE GOALS OF APOSTOLIC ACTION:

- ❖ To tell people about Jesus Christ.
- ❖ To help people grow in their relationship with God.
- ❖ To transform society and its structures.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTION:

- ❖ It is motivated by a love of God. It comes from the heart. (I Cor. 13:1-8, 13)
- ❖ It is well thought out, carefully planned, based on the use of our intellect. It is directed by our heads.

- ❖ It is persevering. It is an act of the will.
- ❖ It is balanced:
  - We understand that God needs us to do our part.
  - We understand that we cannot do everything on our own.
- ❖ It relies on prayer and sacrifice. Our knees are levers (palanca) of apostolic action. (Col. 4:2; Acts 2:42; Heb. 13:16)

#### HOW CAN APOSTOLIC ACTION BE EXERCISED?

- ❖ Individually, through word and witness
- ❖ In groups, linked together by friendship and common interest.
- ❖ In various organizations.

#### WHERE CAN IT BE DONE?

- ❖ In church communities: parishes, dioceses, diocesan organizations and national and international Christian organizations.
- ❖ In the world: families, youth organizations, social circles, vocational and recreational groups.

#### HOW DO WE CARRY OUT APOSTOLIC ACTION?

- ❖ **Faithful living** is more than living a good Christian life. (James 2:14-26) A true apostle also speaks of his love of Christ either to:
  - Non-believers, to lead them to faith (Lk. 24:46-47; Col. 4:5-6; Heb 12:14)
  - Or, believers, to strengthen them and motivate them toward a more fervent life. (Rom. 15:2; Heb. 10:23-25)
- ❖ **Personal contact** is the basis of apostolic action.  
(A personal example would be appropriate here.)
- ❖ **Make friends:** approach them, don't wait for them to approach you.
- ❖ Talk to God about your friend before you talk to your friend about God.
- ❖ **Be a friend:** let friendship grow. Be interested, joyful, understanding, accepting, loving, sincere and optimistic.
- ❖ **Bring your friend to Christ.**
  - Introduce the other person to Christ.
  - The desire for your relationship is for you to become an avenue in the development of a friendship between Christ and the other person.
  - “**Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ.**”
- ❖ **We act:**
  - For Christ: our goal is not necessarily to get others to love us, but to love Christ.
  - With Christ: Jesus helps us with the endeavor.
  - Like Christ: Jesus worked constantly to bring others to Himself, and through Himself to His Father.
  - In Christ: as a part of His Body. (As mentioned above: We are sent into the world to “represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever [we] may be; and...to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world.” [BCP, p. 855])

#### UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

- ❖ Sometimes God surprises us with opportunities for action
- ❖ Although these opportunities are unplanned, we can be prepared to respond through prayer and openness. (A personal example would be appropriate here.)
- ❖ We can expect the unexpected by being attuned to what God might be doing in our lives and the lives of those around us. (Mt. 4:19-20; Lk. 5:4-7)

## CONCLUSION

We act in the community of God's people, the Church, not on our own. We are apostles ("sent") because we are members of God's Church.

## COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

This talk marks the halfway point of the talks on the weekend. In some ways it is central to the Cursillo message. It emphasizes the role and importance of Christian action in the life of the believer. It explains the place of action in the Christian life.

This talk is most effective if it includes stories of how God has been working in the speaker's life and how others have been brought to Christ. However, extravagant examples may tend to cause despair rather than inspiration ("I could never do that.") Thus, it is best to keep examples simple and straightforward. The ringing call to action will come on Sunday. This talk is intended to show the importance of action and to suggest methods to carry it out.

### Suggested Readings:

"What is Cursillo," 2017, [episcopalcursilloministry.org](http://episcopalcursilloministry.org); Publications and Resources.

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## TALK #9 — OBSTACLES TO A LIFE OF GRACE — SPIRITUAL ADVISOR

It is not easy to live the life of grace solely on our own as humans, even with the empowering strength of our own unique relationship with Christ. There are difficulties real and present which we need to recognize and accept. This talk waves a caution flag in front of the candidate, and highlights for the first time the unique role of the clergy (beyond sacramental function) in providing counsel and spiritual direction.

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## TALK #10 — LEADERS — LAY PERSON

### PURPOSE:

- ❖ This talk is intended to serve "as a kind of bridge between the talk on [Action] and the [upcoming] talk on [The Study and Evangelization of Environments]."
- ❖ This is the last talk of the "conversion" phase of the Weekend. It sets the stage for the introduction of the "re-entry" phase as the Weekend ends.
- ❖ This talk is intended to be a clear call to leadership while answering some of the natural objections to this call. The message to the Cursillista is, "you can do it too."

### CORE IDEAS:

- ❖ Each person, by using the talents and experience, has a place in Christ's world.
- ❖ Each of us, as a member of the Body of Christ, is called to help transform the world for Christ.
- ❖ We become leaders by cultivating those natural and supernatural values which will allow us to lead others to Christ.
- ❖ There are many kinds of leaders, and all followers of Christ can be leaders in their own unique ways.

### INTRODUCTION:

- ❖ The tools of Piety, Study and Action give us the means to grow daily in grace.
- ❖ The call to be Christian includes a call to love and serve others in the name of Christ.
- ❖ Loving and serving others in the name of Christ is Christian leadership.

- ❖ We are drawing closer to the end Cursillo Weekend, and we will return to our worlds – places where God wants the light of Christ to shine through us.
  - With a new awareness of our role in the plan of salvation,
  - Ready to offer our gifts and talents to God.
- ❖ Our new orientation to God and the world, empowered by the love of Christ, compels us to take our place in the mission of the church, transforming the world for Christ.
- ❖ Leadership in Christ can be very big or very small, but all of us are called to be leaders.

#### WHAT IS A LEADER?

- ❖ A leader is someone who influences others.
- ❖ A Christian leader is a dedicated apostle (one who is “sent”) committed to changing the world for Christ.
- ❖ Leadership grows as we exercise our opportunities to lead as we are formed by Christ.(Piety, Study, Action)

#### THE SPECIFIC QUALITIES OF A LEADER:

- ❖ Natural Qualities: These are qualities that anyone can have.
  - Initiative:
    - The ability to take responsibility
    - The ability and courage to act with a plan
    - The ability to persevere (Rom. 12:9-12)
    - The ability to look at long range goals
  - Discipline:
    - A willingness to accept the will of God.
    - The capability to work in unity with the church.
    - The willingness to live out one's vocation.
    - The ability to follow other leaders
  - Authenticity:
    - The ability to be honest with ourselves
    - The willingness to be that for which we are best suited.
    - The desire and ability to be what we say we are (walk the talk)
  - Empathy:
    - The ability to identify with others, relate to others with warmth and joy, and to reach out in love to those in need.
  - Generosity:
    - We give what we have to Christ without any expectations.
    - We imitate Christ in humility, hoping to be a model for others
    - We turn over our lives for use by Christ Jesus (II Cor. 4:7; Philippians 4:13)
- ❖ Supernatural Qualities: These are qualities which come from our relationship with God.
  - A living faith: (Heb. 11:1)
    - To give credence to the vision of a living, personal God who wants my salvation.
    - An ongoing conversion to Christ and conversation with Christ -- thus exemplifying a journey of faith and a continuous encounter with God in Christ
    - An ongoing confidence in God; deep conviction that God is at work in one's life.
    - Reflected in the witness of daily life in Christ (Mt. 17:20; 21:21-22)
  - Hope:
    - An expectation of success even in the face of apparent failure. (God is doing something.) (I Cor. 13:12; Isa. 43:19)
    - An enduring hope that conquers discouragement (Rom. 12:12; Heb. 12:1-2, 7)
    - A primary reliance on God (Mt 28:20b)
    - An ability to leave the outcome of our work in God's hands.

- Love: (I Cor. 13:1-13)
 

St. John of the Cross said that the one question we will be asked at the gates of heaven will be, "How well did you love?" Love is central to our life in Christ.  
 Loving is a central part of our life in community. (Rom. 12:9-21)  
 Christ's love sends us out, because Christ loved us (Rom. 5:8)  
 Love in Christ reaches out to others in service (Mt. 25:34-40)  
 We are called to "live in love".(Eph. 5:1-2)
- Humility: (Eph 2:8-10)
 

Leaders recognize that all we are comes from God.  
 Our gifts are for the good of the Body of Christ and we are not to be ashamed of them.  
 The glory belongs to God.  
 We are instruments for God's work, and our talents are for God's use.

**CHRISTIAN LEADERS:** (A personal example would be appropriate here.)

- ❖ Combine natural leadership with Christian virtue.
- ❖ Work as if everything depends on them, and pray like everything depends on God.
- ❖ Are saturated with the Gospel, knowing that the life of Christ informs them in every situation.
- ❖ Live in the world, believing that they are called to transform the world in God's time, according to God's plan.

**ME, A LEADER?** (A personal example would be appropriate here.)

- ❖ Every cursillista has been called to the Three Day Weekend by a friend who believes that he or she is a leader or potential leader in the church.
- ❖ We all have certain areas of influence where we can make a difference in the name of Christ.
- ❖ We all can continue to be leaders where we are, but add Christ.
  - Simply be Christian! Not better than, just following Christ where we are.
  - We cannot do everything, but we can do something. Leaders do whatever can be done, whenever and however, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**CONCLUSION:**

We can only transform the world by carrying the message of Christ with faith, hope, love and humility. Our own natural talents are not enough to transform the world for Christ. As leaders, we are called to rely on Christ's transforming love for us so that we may be instruments of Christ's transforming love in our respective environments.

To grow in effectiveness as leaders, we are called to grow in our relationship with God. Christ's life of leadership is our best model. As we know Christ's story more and more, our lives are shaped to be more like his.

**COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:**

By the time this talk is given there is likely to be a significant level of joy and enthusiasm among the Cursillistas. This is the most inspirational talk of the day. It is intended to give the Cursillistas enthusiasm to do the things they have been learning about (Piety, Study, Action), and see that the method can help them be a servant for God. The speaker is encouraged to use uplifting examples of leadership to inspire the listeners. However, one is also cautioned to include small victories of leadership as well as large ones. The hope is that every listener believes that he or she can be a leader in some way – big or small – for Christ's Body.

It is important that the listener get a clear picture of what kind of person a Christian leader is called to be. Many Cursillistas may be at a point where they are feeling like their life is now a "clean slate," ready for God to use them. Remember that this talk will be followed with even more specific examples in the next talk, "The Study and Evangelization of Environments," on the last day. This is an opportunity for the listeners to begin to imagine what they might look like in their world once they return to "normal life," but it is intended to only be a beginning. It is more important at this point to inspire rather than convince.

#### Suggested Readings:

*Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis

*The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis

*Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels & Mark Mittleberg

"What is Cursillo," 2017, [episcopalcursilloministry.org](http://episcopalcursilloministry.org); Publications and Resources.

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## TALK #11 – STUDY & EVANGELIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTS – LAY PERSON

#### PURPOSE:

Now it is time to show how the talk on Leaders can be applied in our lives. Candidates are encouraged to look at the environments they left, consider their situations, and determine how to rebuild them on a Christian foundation. The talk should answer the question, "How do I transform my environment for Christ?"

#### CORE IDEAS:

- ❖ We live in several different types of environments: family, work, parish, recreation, social. The persons we interact with in those environments may need to encounter Christ as we have.
- ❖ Evangelization is a part of our baptismal covenant:
  - Proclaiming by word and example the good news of God in Christ.
  - Seeking and serving Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves.
  - Striving for justice and peace and respecting the dignity of every human being. (BCP, p. 305)Thus, evangelization is a basic expectation of our faith journeys.
- ❖ Evangelization of our environments does not happen by accident, it must be planned.

#### INTRODUCTION:

- ❖ We live in different environments -- our family, work, parish, recreational, social environments are places where we are known and respected by others.
- ❖ We can change those environments through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Our ability to transform our environments is always less than or equal to the degree to which we have allowed God to transform our lives.
- ❖ Transformation occurs on three levels:
  1. In ourselves
  2. In others
  3. In the total environment.

These three levels are interrelated, and the work of transformation/ evangelization occurs simultaneously in all three.

#### IN OURSELVES:

"And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit." (2 Cor. 3:18)

- ❖ In our prayer, we draw on God's power and guidance. (Luke 11:9-10)
- ❖ In our minds, we grow to understand how to transform our environment. (Rom. 12:2)
- ❖ In our hearts:
  - We seek to be more loving in every situation
  - We reflect the kind of love that draws us to Christ.

- We build bonds of friendship and interest with others, which will inevitably lead to sharing our love for Christ.
- ❖ In our will, we decide and are determined to accomplish something. (Heb. 12:1)
 

*[This is a good spot to mention that they will be hearing about a method for ongoing growth in Christ called Group Reunion and Ultreya later today.]*

#### IN OTHERS:

We observe how others in our environment relate to the Christian ideal. We are likely to observe several different types of relationships to Christ. (Specific examples are recommended here. Care should be taken to be non-judgmental in these descriptions.)

- ❖ Those who are committed to their Christian walk:
  - Who daily strive to live a life of Grace.
  - Who are working on transforming their own life, but may not be committed to transforming the world around them. (their environment)
- ❖ Those who try to be Christian some of the time — they believe and practice their faith under certain conditions:
  - When they are with other Christians and it is comfortable.
  - Or, when they are afraid or in danger (God as my “emergency kit” or “spare tire”).
  - Or, when things appear to be hopeless (God as a last resort).
  - Or, when it is helpful for their reputation (using God for “name dropping”).
  - Or, when they are making a deal under duress (“fox-hole God”).
- ❖ Those who are Christians by affiliation. They have always been Christian, but never thought much about their faith or why they believe. Their God may be one constructed from childhood impressions and experiences with parents (good and/or bad). They live on the fringe of the Church or may be Christian in name only.
- ❖ Those who are not Christians, they do not know God, and they live their lives without any reference to God. Some may sense an emptiness in their lives, but no one they trust has ever taken the time to witness to them of God’s love for us all.
- ❖ Those who have consciously rejected Christianity:
  - As a matter of conviction (atheists or non-Christians).
  - Or, as a result of tragedy or disillusionment.
- ❖ Those who reject Christianity as a result of apathy and indifference.

#### IN THE ENVIRONMENT:

- ❖ We have to work with more than individuals. We also have to work with their habitats. Individuals live in situations and in groups, so we have to work within those given situations and groups as we work with each individual.
- ❖ To Christianize means to permeate — to work from within the environment to bring others into union with Christ.
- ❖ Become fully a part of the environment, remaining true to Christ, in order to bring it to Christ. (I Cor. 9:20-22)
- ❖ Work with other Christians to transform the environment. First one, then several, then more, can change the tone of a group. Perhaps other Cursillistas can help with prayer and sacrificial giving (palanca).

#### WHAT TO DO:

- ❖ Win their hearts, so they will be open to receiving Christ. Be loving, patient and understanding. (Heb. 12:14-15)

- ❖ Win their minds. Help them to understand who Christ is and what it is to live the Christian life. Know and believe that every person has a hunger for God. As one of the saints has said, “We live with a God-shaped vacuum in our souls.”
- ❖ Win their will. Communicate the Christian ideal of Grace; present the call to follow Christ. If a person is drawn to the Christian life, he or she will see it as attractive and compelling. Their hearts are being prepared by the Holy Spirit. We will trust God to guide us about when to extend an invitation to follow Christ.

*[This is an excellent place for specific examples of successes in evangelization in your own journey as well as others'. Keep your examples simple and straightforward. The hope is that your "audience" will say to themselves, "I can do that!" when this talk is completed. It is also important to point out to the candidates that this is a long process. It is unlikely that they will be able to return home and immediately transform their friends and family for Christ, although it may happen on rare occasions where God has already prepared the way. Usually, winning an environment for Christ is a gradual process. Emphasize: "Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ." Friendship (even in family relationships) comes first.]*

#### CONCLUSION:

The evangelization of environments takes place when groups of Christians who have deepened their own relationship with Christ interact in the world with those who desire a deeper relationship with Christ but do not know how to accomplish it. The love of Christ radiating into an environment will prepare it for transformation and growth. We are called to be “the light of the world” (Math. 5:14) wherever we live and serve in the world.

#### COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

This is the first talk of the last day. Thus, we begin the “re-entry” phase of the weekend. This is the point at which we begin to remind the candidates that although they have changed, the world they left behind is still the same. This begins the message to persevere and trust God. This is also a first chance to mention Group Reunion and Ultreya as a method for continuing the journey. Here we can begin to emphasize the idea of “fourth day first.”

Be upbeat and positive. Let your illustrations and examples be humorous and simple. Make every effort in the “IN OTHERS” section to keep examples charitable, non-judgmental, and humorous. Tell the story from your point of view, but it is not necessary to exhaust the topic (or your listeners). As mentioned in *Preparing a Talk in the Lay Talk Workbook*, p. 6, the purpose of the rollo is to inform and generate table discussion.

The talk should be confident and optimistic. It is Christ’s cause, and it will succeed.

#### Suggested Readings:

*Book of Common Prayer*, Baptismal Covenant, p. 304-305; Catechism, p. 858-859

*Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels & Mark Mittleberg

“What is Cursillo,” 2017, [episcopalcursilloministry.org](http://episcopalcursilloministry.org); Publications and Resources.



## TALK #12 — CHRISTIAN LIFE (LIFE IN GRACE) — SPIRITUAL ADVISOR

This talk presents the Rule of Life card which will help the candidates structure their lives in grace. The talk will mainly stress piety, keeping in contact with Christ. Study and Action relate more to each person” unique environment, and therefore the candidates will work these out on their own, with the assistance of their spiritual director, once they get home. This talk concentrates on making a plan for growth in piety.

During the discussion time, the team can help explain the Rule of Life card, but not pressure anyone. Let each find those elements which are meaningful. This is a crucial time, in that this

is the time when candidates are making a commitment. If possible, there should be time for reflection and meditation, and an opportunity to confer individually with one of the Spiritual Directors briefly if that is necessary and appropriate.

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## **TALK #13 – CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION – LAY PERSON**

### PURPOSE:

This talk is intended to demonstrate that life in Christ is celebrated, deepened, and upheld within a community. Here the Cursillista learns that a group of people working together can accomplish more for God than an individual working alone. There are no solo Christians. A solitary Christian is a paralyzed Christian. Evangelization happens when communities of Christians work together towards the common goal of transforming the world for Christ.

### CORE IDEAS:

- ❖ Community supports us as we follow the call of Christ in our lives.
- ❖ Community is where we discover our gifts and help others to discover theirs.
- ❖ The whole church is Christian community in action, but the church consists of many smaller communities, both formal and informal.
- ❖ Environments can and will be transformed through Christians working together.

### INTRODUCTION:

- ❖ All of God's people are a part of Christian community. "The ministers of the Church are laypersons, bishops, priests, and deacons." (1<sup>st</sup> Q/A, "The Ministry", BCP, p. 855) Each ministry has its place and purpose in the community.
- ❖ Our call to be a community in action is issued from our baptismal covenant.
- ❖ Our faith in Christ makes us "saints" (those who are holy, set aside for God's purposes); our action makes us apostles (those who are "sent").
- ❖ Christian community in action is a force for change. "Jesus has come to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable."

### MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY:

All members of the church have the same basic ministry, "to represent Christ and his Church." (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Q/A, "The Ministry", BCP p. 855-856) How that ministry is carried out varies among the different ministers of the church:

- ❖ Laypersons:
  - 98% of the Church is made up of laypersons; this is where the work of Christ Interfaces with the world.
  - Lay persons are called to "bear witness to [Christ] wherever they may be; and according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world." (ibid)
- ❖ Bishops are called to serve as "apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese." (ibid)
- ❖ Priests are called to serve "particularly as pastor to the people..." (ibid)
- ❖ Deacons are called to serve "particularly as a servant of those in need..."(ibid)

Together we form the community of faith, the Body of Christ. (I Cor. 12:4-31)

### THE CALL TO ACTION COMES FROM OUR BAPTISMAL COVENANT:

- ❖ We are called to be in community, to "continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers." (BCP p. 304, Acts 2:42) That community is the Church, the

Body of Christ, in which we worship together and pray together, learn and grow together, and are nourished by the sacraments.

- ❖ We are called to persevere in resisting evil and in penitence. (James 4:7, Acts 3:19-20)
- ❖ We are called to tell the story of faith. (I Cor. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:1-2)
- ❖ We are called to “seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving [our] neighbor as [ourselves].” (BCP p. 305; Col. 1:23-24)
- ❖ We are called to “strive for justice and peace among all people.” (BCP, p. 305) Not only are we being transformed, but Christian community will transform society as well.

#### SAINTS AND APOSTLES:

- ❖ Growth in Christ changes and molds us as a community into the image of Christ. The word “saint” comes from the Latin word “sanctus,” which means “holy” or “set aside for God’s use” — we are instruments for God’s purposes. (Phil. 2:5-13) Ongoing growth in Christ happens within the church through worship and study, as well as in the Group Reunion and Ultreya which will be discussed in our next two talks.
- ❖ Once growth in Christ begins, we are “sent” (in Greek, “apostolos”) to serve the world in Christ’s name.
- ❖ For some of us, our service is to others in the community of faith.  
*(Here is an opportunity to use the Cursillo weekend as an example of Christian community in action. Each person who serves on team has a particular role to fill and a particular service to perform for the community. Table leaders have striven to form an even smaller community where the members serve one another as they learn and grow during the weekend. Others outside of the team have served the community in various ways — palanca, meal service, other special offerings.)*
- ❖ For others of us, our service is outside of the community of faith to those in the world.  
*(Here is an opportunity to use examples in your own life or the lives of others — e.g. prison ministry, mission work, Habitat. Be as specific and varied with your illustrations as possible. Note that there are innumerable ways to be Christian community in action.)*

#### HOW TO ACHIEVE APOSTOLIC ACTION:

- ❖ Know the problems: understand your situation.
- ❖ Know who can solve the problems; who can help make a change.
- ❖ Make a plan for apostolic action in your environment.
  - Everyone can do something and everyone is needed. Identify the talents needed for each part of the job. Allow each person to do their part, and encourage one another’s calls and abilities.
  - Some will serve at the front of the ministry, some will serve at the back — all are needed for apostolic success.
- ❖ Plan your work and work your plan. There may be a need for adjustment from time to time, but success includes staying focused on the plan and the goal.
- ❖ Acknowledge the importance of everyone’s part. Community means everyone’s contribution is valuable to overall “success” in the ministry.

*(One example you might use is that of the briquettes that are brought together in a charcoal fire. A briquette that is removed from the fire quickly loses its fiery glow.]*

#### CONDITIONS FOR ACTION:

- ❖ Love:
  - Work as a part of a team; love those with whom you work. (I Cor. 13:1-13)
- ❖ Generosity:
  - Give Jesus your best and he will take care of the rest.

- ❖ Faith:
  - Trust the Holy Spirit to help; don't be afraid.
- ❖ Responsibility and initiative:
  - Act as the Body of Christ in a strong, determined, and persevering way.
- ❖ Gifts of the Holy Spirit:
  - These will equip us to live and work for Christ.

#### CONCLUSION:

Christian community in action is an extension of Christ's hands into the world. (I Cor. 14:12) Each time we reach out in love in the name of Christ we open the door of hope to those who might not encounter Christ in any other way. Our action as a community will change lives and transform the world for Christ.

*(The speaker may want to add an encouragement to "look at how much change Christ has done among us this weekend.")*

#### COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

This talk should demonstrate confidence in Christ and in our ability as Christians to accomplish that which the Lord places in our hearts. It is best if actual experiences demonstrate both small and large communities in action. Tell the story from your point of view, but it is not necessary to exhaust the topic (or your listeners). The purpose of the talk is to inform and generate table discussion. Let the listeners imagine where they might fit into the "grand plan." Let them know that they are being welcomed into a community of action that is active and alive — the Cursillo community. This is an opportunity to remind the listeners that this is only the beginning of an exciting journey.

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## TALK #14 — GROUP REUNION\* — LAY PERSON

#### PURPOSE:

This talk is intended to assure the Candidates that what has begun this weekend will not be lost. Group Reunion is a method which assists the individual in continuing the growth in Christ that has begun at the Cursillo Weekend. This talk is to assist the individual in knowing that there is a method which is dependable and time proven.

#### CORE IDEAS:

- ❖ Personal spiritual direction, Group Reunion and Ultreya are the three main elements that we use in Cursillo for perseverance in our faith. This is what we refer to in the Cursillo Method as the Fourth Day. These are not "extra responsibilities" to be taken on, but instead tools to accomplish that which we have accepted as a part of our baptismal covenant.
- ❖ Group Reunion is a group of friends, perhaps 3-6 in number, who agree to meet together regularly, share their spiritual journeys, and hold one another accountable in their growth in Christ.
- ❖ Group Reunion provides a method of perseverance. It is the core of our Fourth Day.
- ❖ "We do not have Group Reunions so that there will be people to attend a Cursillo Weekend; on the contrary, we have Cursillo Weekends so that there will be people to make Group Reunions." (Edwardo Bonnin, one of the founders of Cursillo)

#### INTRODUCTION:

The weekend is nearing its completion and some may be wondering, "How will I maintain this closeness with God once our weekend community is dispersed?" We are promised in scripture that nothing "can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:38-39). To maintain our life in grace we need contact with Christ and with one another. Our connection with Christ is maintained through prayer

and scripture reading, the sacraments and spiritual direction. Our connection with one another is maintained by regular corporate worship, Group Reunion and Ultreya. Group Reunion insures regular contact with a small group of close friends. Ultreya insures regular contact with the larger community. We will explore the Ultreya in our next talk.

#### DEFINITION:

A Group Reunion is formed by people who are, or can be, Christians and friends; they meet to become better Christians and friends. This small Group meets to share their journeys in Christ, to provide a place for ongoing formation, to hold each other accountable and to encourage one another in living out their faith. The principle of grouping is based on Jesus' promise to be among us whenever "two or three are gathered" in his name (Mt. 18:20), and on the activities of the disciples after the resurrection. ("...devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42) A good Group Reunion is a means of nurturing deep fellowship in Christ.

#### THE PURPOSE OF GROUP REUNION:

- ❖ To accelerate the conversion of each member
- ❖ To help them become the Church in the world
- ❖ To strengthen every member's commitment to the work of evangelism in the home, the neighborhood, the workplace, and the world
- ❖ To join the members in friendship and union with Christ's love
- ❖ To help the members mature in faith, hope and love
- ❖ To do all this through the sharing of Christian life

#### THE METHOD OF GROUP REUNION:

*(This would be an appropriate time to hand out Group Reunion cards.)*

In the group we share, review, plan, and ask for the support of the group for our life in Christ. This process has been arranged in a particular order on the grouping card in the hope that it will help the group to focus on their formation, growth and witness.

- ❖ Prayer to the Holy Spirit: we begin the group reunion with this prayer, that we may recognize the Holy Spirit's role in bringing us our life of grace and opening our hearts to encounter one another fully in love.
- ❖ The sharing of God's love:
  - Piety (John 15:5)
    - "Have I maintained my commitments in my rule of life?" This is not intended as a "guilt trip", but rather as a regular reminder to encourage adherence to a rule of life. This might also be a time when one would consider and discuss changing one's rule.
    - "With what other spiritual aids have I nourished my vital union with Christ this week?" Our piety sometimes is affected by events, individuals, or special opportunities that go beyond our regular rule. This is a time to consider those possibilities.
    - "What was the moment in which I felt closest to Christ?" This is an opportunity to recognize and share with others an awareness of Christ's presence in our lives. Sharing that moment may also be an inspiration for others.
  - Study – "Your word is a lamp to my feet ..." (Ps. 119:105)
    - "What have I studied that has increased my understanding of my relationship with God and God's creation?" We share together our efforts to learn more about God and the Christian life.
  - Action – "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." (Mt. 4:19)
    - "If I have had a specific plan for attempting to witness for or serve the Lord in some particular area, what successes or disappointments have I experienced through this plan?" It is important to note two points here. First, witnesses for Christ plan ways in which they can share their faith with others. Second, sometimes these plans do not work. Significant action is planned with the understanding that even if our plans do not immediately yield fruit, God's work is still being done in us and in the world.

- “What unexpected opportunity to witness has the Lord offered to me?” Sometimes God has plans for us that we do not know about. This is an encouragement to be watchful for opportunities to serve as a witness for Christ in everyday circumstances.
- “What are my plans for the coming week?” Recall the adage, “If we fail to plan, we are planning to fail.” This is a time for members of the group to plan ways in which they can reach out in the name of Christ to family members, co-workers, friends and neighbors.
- “Consider group plans.” Some groups do witnessing work together. These activities could include actions such as working at the local soup kitchen, in the prisons, or elsewhere in the community.
- Closing Devotions – (Phil. 4:6) As it began, the reunion ends with prayer. This is a time to share needs and special prayer requests as well as to give thanks for all God is doing in each one’s life and in the life of the Group Reunion.

#### HOW TO FORM A GROUP REUNION:

- ❖ Start with people you like and want to know better. It is difficult to be intimate with someone you do not know very well. The closer the members are at the beginning of the formation of the group, the more quickly the group will bond, and the higher possibility that the group will thrive and grow in grace and love.
- ❖ Commit to making the group a priority. There are numerous demands on our time. Group reunion can only happen if the members meet on a regular (weekly) basis. Thus, it is best to make the meeting time one which will rarely need to be moved or postponed. Just like any other important appointment, put Group Reunion on your calendar or PDA as a reminder, and be punctual in keeping the appointment.
- ❖ Allow the group to be open to the possibility of inviting new people to join the group. Ideally, new persons are not invited before discussing the invitation with the group. However, even a Group Reunion can “Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ.”
- ❖ The natural, open sharing of your table fellowship this weekend is a good pattern for Group Reunion.
- ❖ No one is the leader of the Group Reunion; each person contributes and takes responsibility for the life of the group.
- ❖ Ask your sponsor for help in finding or forming a group.
- ❖ Be patient. It may take time to find the right “chemistry.” If the group is an existing group, agree to come “visit” a few times before making a commitment to be a member. If you are forming a new group, give the group time to bond and build trust.

Reunion Groups change and grow. They are dynamic and organic. Groups also have a life span. This life span may be very long or very short. There may come a time when you realize that the existing group is no longer nourishing your “vital union with Christ” or when the group as a body needs to disband. Celebrate the life that was and move on. Our need for Group Reunion will always be present. We will always need to share our Christian life deeply with a few others in order to continue to grow in Christ.

*(If you have not already done so, this would be an excellent time to share your personal experience with your own Group Reunion.)*

#### CONCLUSION:

We all have valued friendships, but Group Reunion offers us an opportunity to talk with trusted friends about our faith journey, and to hear their stories of faith. The experience of Group Reunion brings participants closer to one another and closer to God. With Christ in the center, Group Reunion offers growth in grace and faith that the members might go forth into the world and proclaim that faith to others — transforming the world for Christ.

#### COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

At this point in the weekend, candidates are likely to be a bit restless and anxious about returning to the world. This talk is most helpful if it is practical and precise. The candidates will probably not recall much

detail about this talk. Instead, the intent is to offer the insight that there is a method for continuing the growth that has begun on the weekend. This method has been shown to work for the speaker and numerous others, and will work for the new Cursillistas as well.

The keynote for the speaker is confidence in the Cursillo Method. The listeners need to feel assured that they are not alone in facing the challenges of the days to come. An ongoing relationship with Christ and with our brothers and sisters in Christ is available through Group Reunion, and will last long after the Three Day Weekend is over. Group Reunion is the foundation of our Fourth Day. This ongoing relationship will allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives as we continue to grow in grace.

"I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil 1:6)

#### Suggested Readings:

*The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren, (esp. Chapters 15-21)

"*What is Cursillo?*," 2017, [episcopalcursilloministry.org](http://episcopalcursilloministry.org); Publications and Resources.

"*Group Reunion*," 2017, [episcopalcursilloministry.org](http://episcopalcursilloministry.org); Publications and Resources.

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## **TALK #15 — ULTREYA\* — LAY PERSON**

#### PURPOSE:

This talk is intended to offer encouragement and confidence to the new Cursillistas as they go back to their environments. While the world has not changed during their weekend, the Cursillistas have a new set of tools for their spiritual journey. That new set of tools is the Cursillo Method. Group Reunion is the small group for growth in Christ; Ultreya is the regular experience of the larger community. This talk is the full and final description of the Cursillo Method and life in the Fourth Day -- regular contact with Christ and regular contact with one's brothers and sisters in Christ.

- ❖ CORE IDEAS:
- ❖ Perseverance is the key to growth in Christ through the Cursillo method.
- ❖ The Fourth Day is the rest of one's life, a pilgrimage to God in which we encourage one another by the cry, "Ultreya!" Onward, upward and forward!
- ❖ Participation in Group Reunion and Ultreya are key elements for continued Christian growth.

#### INTRODUCTION:

Cursillo originated in Majorca, Spain. Catholic Action groups in Spain planned a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James at Compostela. The pilgrimage was held in 1948 and was a visible sign of renewal in the Church. As pilgrims traveled the rough terrain to the shrine, they encouraged one another with the word, "Ultreya!", that is, "Onward!" or "Keep on going!" As the Cursillo method developed, "Ultreyas" became the community gatherings for support and encouragement.

#### THE MISSION:

- ❖ Our baptismal covenant calls us to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to persevere in resisting evil, to proclaim the Good News, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, and to strive for justice and peace. (BCP, p. 304-305) Cursillo provides a method to make that covenant a living reality in our lives.
- ❖ While our Cursillo weekend may have given us a "mountain-top" experience, the biblical story of the Transfiguration (compare Mt. 17:1-21, Lk. 9:28-43, Mk. 9:2-29) offers us an example of how mountain top experiences sometimes lead us into "valley" duty.
- ❖ Our Cursillo weekend may have changed us, but our environments at home are still the same.

(A personal example may be helpful here.)

- ❖ Cursillo provides a means by which we are able to persevere in our faith journeys and continue to be converted by the work of the Holy Spirit within us.  
*(A personal example may be helpful here.)*
- ❖ Being changed and transformed we are able to reach out and transform our environments for Christ.  
(Mt. 28:19)  
*(A personal example may be helpful here.)*

#### THE PURPOSE OF ULTREYA:

Ultreya has four major purposes:

- ❖ Ultreya provides for sharing: for individuals in the Floating Group Reunions; for the community as a whole in the lay witness talk given by the speaker and in the responses to the talk.
- ❖ Ultreya creates an atmosphere of enthusiasm where all can witness to their own experiences of God in worship and prayer, in encounters with others, and in evangelizing the world.
- ❖ Ultreya aids in ongoing conversion of the participants. By praying, sharing, and hearing the Lay witness talk, the participants are encouraged to incorporate new ideas and opportunities for growth in Christ into their lives.
- ❖ Ultreya encourages evangelization of environments with the knowledge that the individual is a part of a witnessing community of faith, and by fosters friendships that encourage personal and communal evangelization.

*(A personal example may be helpful here.)*

#### THE METHOD:

- ❖ The basic principles of Cursillo include:
  - regular contact with Christ through prayer, sacraments, liturgy, study of scripture, and spiritual direction; and
  - regular contact with brothers and sisters in Christ through Group Reunion, Ultreya, and regular attendance at corporate worship.
- ❖ The Ultreya leads people to live, share and grow in the Spirit enkindled on the Weekend. (An example of how the speaker's Ultreya has helped)
- ❖ The basic, suggested format of Ultreya is as follows: (See ECM Library book, "Ultreya" for more details)
  - Prayer
  - Small "Floating" Group Reunions for sharing recent experiences of Piety, Study, and Action (30 Minutes).
    - To broaden each person's vision of ways to live in Christ
    - To help people seek out and discover friends with whom to form a permanent group reunion.
  - Lay Witness Talk (10 Minutes)
    - Tells a personal story,
    - About a recent action and its result
    - Planned with prayer and study
    - Undertaken to bring a person and/or environment closer to Christ
  - Lay Response and Spiritual Director's Scriptural Response reflecting on the talk and relating it to an event or events in the life of Christ
  - Announcements and closing prayers

#### CONCLUSION:

- ❖ Recall that the word "Cursillo" means "little course." As this "little course" in Christianity concludes its first-level course, we are encouraged to continue our learning and growing in Christ. Group Reunion and Ultreya are the primary tools offered by the Cursillo Ministry for continuing our growth in Christ.

- ❖ We can have confidence as we face our future in faith that “Christ and I are an overwhelming majority,” and we have a community we can count on.
- ❖ If we will follow the basic plan of the Cursillo ministry we will be able to “live and share what is fundamental for being a Christian,” part of the definition of the Cursillo ministry.
- ❖ The Cursillo ministry’s intent is to never leave anyone stranded. Ideally, everyone can find a place to grow in Group Reunion and Ultreya.
- ❖ Dedication to Christ with these tools will allow our faith to become that which it is intended to be: deeply felt, lived in daily life, and spread by love in word and deed.

#### COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

- ❖ This is primarily a witness talk. Ideally, it presents a picture of one who has made a Cursillo weekend, has become a dedicated apostle, and has lived the Fourth Day using the method of spiritual direction, Group Reunion, and Ultreya. The result has been a strong and fruitful Christian life.
- ❖ The speaker needs to be personally convinced of the value of the Christian message and of the help afforded to his or her own living as a Christian witness which is provided by the Cursillo method.
- ❖ The talk is best when it is realistic and enthusiastic with a tone of confidence:
  - Realistic – perseverance will not be easy
  - Enthusiastic – it is possible to persevere and see results
- ❖ At the same time, the speaker is encouraged to avoid presenting Group Reunion and Ultreya as extra responsibilities to be taken on by the Cursillistas. Instead, the method of Cursillo is to be presented as a set of tools by which one can accomplish that responsibility which has already been accepted by virtue of one’s baptismal covenant. The Cursillo method is a means of achieving that which we are already committed to do.

#### Suggested Readings:

“*What is Cursillo?*,” 2017, [episcopalcursilloministry.org](http://episcopalcursilloministry.org); Publications and Resources.

“*Ultreya*,” 2017, [episcopalcursilloministry.org](http://episcopalcursilloministry.org); Publications and Resources.

“*Group Reunion*,” 2017, [episcopalcursilloministry.org](http://episcopalcursilloministry.org); Publications and Resources.

**\* It is important to allot ample time for these talks. Even though Talk #14 and Talk #15 come at the end of the Weekend, they form the heart of the Cursillo Method. If a full understanding of Group Reunion and Ultreya and their ongoing support is not provided, the primary reason for the Episcopal Cursillo Weekend will be lost**