

THE THIRD DAY

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As leaders in our own movements, I believe the first question we must ask ourselves is do we understand the message of The Third Day, and are we presenting it properly? Do our candidates understand the message? We hold Cursillo weekends, we put many people through them, but all too often, within the first few months after the weekend, we find ourselves wondering where are these new Cursillistas? Why haven't they come to Ultreya? Why aren't they in Group Reunion? Rather than focusing on **how** to make Ultreya better or **how** to get our Cursillistas into Group Reunion, we perhaps should be looking at the Third Day of the Cursillo weekend as it is this day that is of utmost importance.

Each day of the Cursillo weekend has a purpose and the purpose of the Third Day is to allow the candidates to make the Third Encounter, the Encounter with Others. Its message explains how essential this encounter can be and once made, what to do. None of the three encounters is simply a matter of encountering, it is really entering into relationship. It is sharing the love we have discovered with others. Not only with those on the journey with us, but also with those who have never heard the Good News.

The first and second encounters affirm in us who we are and who Jesus is. In the third encounter, we find ourselves compelled to find the way to help others find the joy of living in Grace. We do this by working together with those who believe as we do thus becoming a Christianity in Action and from this Christian community is born.

In our studies of the origins, it is in the context of the Third Day that we have discovered the most distortion of the message and the method. The titles of the Rollos have been changed or the Rollos themselves totally dropped. As we discussed last year, changing the name of a Rollo might not mean very much if all the leaders were thoroughly versed in the mentality and had a deep understanding of the authentic message of each Rollo, but sadly this is often not the case. We repeat over and over during team preparation that each Rollo is only one part of a total message, but most often the Rollista prepares his/her Rollo totally out of context, resulting in the Rollos having very little to do with what is said in those which precede or follow them. The title of a Rollo carries with it a preconceived idea of what the message is and the Rollista prepares what he/she will say to fit the title. When the name of a Rollo is changed, the message is easily distorted.

The goal of the Third Day of the weekend is to enable the candidates to make the third of three encounters, the Encounter With Others. The message of the previous two days becomes clear as the day unfolds and the Third Day shows how this encounter with others can be achieved and what to do.

Let's look at the previous two encounters:

Presuming the Cursillo has achieved its purpose so far, the candidates will have made that first and all important encounter with self. Beginning with the meditation on the first evening, "Know Yourself", and following with "the Prodigal Son". Then on the first morning beginning with "The Three Glances of Christ", along with all of the Rollos of the first day, the Candidates have begun to journey into self.

Do you remember how you felt on your weekend? A journey into self can be frightening. We all have some fear in facing ourselves. I have heard it said that it's a scary ride, but worth the trip. As the weekend progresses, the fear turns into an acknowledgement and

acceptance of our sinfulness, but also brings a recognition of ourselves as persons. Being able to recognize the beauty within ourselves and the value of our personhood, seeing ourselves as being created in the image of God is of primary importance. The more of a person we become, the freer we are to allowing the Holy Spirit into our lives. We become more fully human, fully alive and therefore, fully Christian.

The second day begins with the meditation "The Person of Christ". This meditation shows who Christ really is. Many candidates may be hearing this for the first time, others may find this meditation brings them to an entirely new awareness of Christ as a person.

The Cursillo presents Christ as a close friend who is alive in us. In the process, Jesus is presented as a person – not as a judge. As someone who loves and accepts us unconditionally, one who offers Hope. When I came to Cursillo I was in a personal relationship with Christ. As I shared last year, it was exactly that – very personal – to my mind it was for me alone.

The message of the Cursillo is that the Christ we have found needs to be found by everyone we meet in the everyday circumstances of our lives.

The Rollos of the second day contain a strong and vibrant witness of Christ alive in the life of the Rollista.

Last year's conference theme – Evangelization Through Conversion – We Are The Good News, is the precise method used in Cursillo. We evangelize others by witnessing to our own conversion which is very different to converting others by evangelizing them.

The second day presents rollos which speak to the heart of the candidates. What is shared by the Rollistas allows the candidates to see it is possible to live a new life with Christ as a friend and a brother. The whole method of Cursillo is based on the fact that God reaches us through our hearts first.

"This chemistry between God and man is the best evangelical tool. This reality, together with a new ideology, was the origin of Cursillo. It discarded all proselytism and imperialism and the word conquer. In the same way that a man and a woman are drawn together, God doesn't conquer people through actions, he draws them to Him through their hearts." Jesus Valls, II Conversations.

At the end of the second day the candidate has begun to know himself, and he/she sees Christ in a new light and has begun to know themselves as loved by God. The desire to respond to that love has begun to stir within them. Desiring to change, to live in Grace, they want to share what they now know. They have heard the Good News, now they need to hear how to share what they have learned. How to become the Good News.

As with the preceding two days, the Third Day begins with a meditation: "Christ's Message To The Cursillista". This meditation shows them they can count on Christ for everything – but – they also hear that He is counting on them.

On this day, the candidates turn their faces towards the world.

Unfortunately, in many places, the Third Day Rollos have been changed, some have been dropped altogether. The result is that the most important message to the Cursillista has been distorted. The scheduling of day three has been shortened to the extent that now, instead of living in each moment as they have experienced in the previous days, the focus is directed to the end of the weekend. We need to take great care to avoid giving the

impression that there is a rush to “get everything done”, to be ready for the Clausura at a certain time.

Beginning with the meditation, the candidates begin hearing about the method of Cursillo. The call to be disciples is not unique to Cursillo, it is the call of the Church. What **is** unique to Cursillo is the very concrete method which is presented as well as the means to persevere in that method.

The Third Day needs to be well presented and is vital for a successful conclusion to the Three Days of Cursillo. If we pick and choose what we wish to do – or leave out of a weekend, if we rush through the day, if all of the prescribed elements are not included, the three days become merely a “nice weekend away”.

Yes, many may leave the weekend without ever having heard the authentic Cursillo message, and still begin to live differently. In the beginning they may have a desire to **do** something – but what? They become involved in parish ministry or other Christian organizations, but that is not the purpose of the Cursillo. These endeavors in themselves are not wrong, but they can distract the Cursillista from his or her proper role. In the words of Eduardo Bonin:

“By wanting to alter this logic, and to introduce a rollo about Christian Community at this point, is a sure indication that the original intent of the rollo Christianity in Action, which is necessary to maintain the purpose of the Movement, has been discarded, and instead is aimed at an incardination of the Cursillista into ecclesial environments or structures before – or instead of – pointing them towards their own secular environments.” (the Foundational Charism. Presented by Eduardo Bonin, V World Encounter, Korea 1997)

The first Rollo of the Third Day, “The Study of the Environment” points back to the Leaders Rollo which ends the second day, and the whole method of Cursillo is presented in it. Make a friend, be a friend, and bring that friend to Christ is a very effective slogan, but what does it mean?

The Study of the Environment” Rollo, as written by Eduardo Bonin, is the one from which all others take their focus. This rollo was reintroduced in its original form at last year’s Conference along with an explanation of why it is absolutely essential for all Cursillistas to understand it’s message. This Rollo presents the blue print of becoming an effective evangelizer in the world. We say “in the world” as that is where Christ needs us to be, the Church needs us to be, and the unique message and method of Cursillo calls us to be as Christians. Christians who live as if they have not only heard the Good News, but who actually believe it, and in believing it, they are anxious to share it.

The message of the weekend is given in a style that is kerygmatic, not catechetical, in the form of Rollos. Not talks, or teachings, or presentations – Rollos. The method of the weekend is a message delivered to the heart, not the head. Nowhere is this truer than on the Third Day.

The word “Rollo” has been kept for the exact reason it was chosen in the beginning – there **is** no other word to adequately describe the style and manner in which the message is given. The message is received by the candidates through the Rollista’s sharing of a lived experience. As I have previously said, this style is unique to Cursillo and in Cursillo is known as “walking the talk”.

If every Cursillista who serves on a team for a weekend learned the message of each Rollo in order to live it - not simply to give it – we **would be** a Christianity in Action.

When Candidates are able to hear and see in the life of the Rollista that there truly is the possibility of being able to do something in their own environments, their own little corner of the world, they become eager to hear the message of the next Rollos. They want to share the Good News and friendship, but are uncertain of how to approach those they meet.

It is at this point we often hear “I wish we could stay here”. This is also the point where the responsibility of team leadership becomes crucial. The leaders have to show that what is being proposed is not only possible but is being lived by those present and by all who have supported and encouraged with Palanca – the prayers and sacrifices offered for the Candidates.

Eduardo says the Christianity in Action Rollo maintains the very purpose of the Movement. It gives the Candidates an overview of how to live their new found life in Grace, and it lays the foundation for the final Rollo of the weekend, Total Security, by evoking a hunger in the candidates to want what we have to offer.

Of course what we have to offer has to be something not only offered on the weekend, but into the Fourth Day. What is said in the Cursillo weekend must be what is lived in the Ultreya.

As I have already said, the Christianity in Action Rollo has been changed in recent years to Christian Community in Action, Christian Community, or sometimes simply Community. With the title change comes a changed message. The focus is now placed on community – what it is, what it isn't, and how to create it. This entire subject will be explored at a later point in this Conference. It is mentioned here because it is vital to the message of the entire Third Day and the successful conclusion of The Three Days.

All the Rollos of the weekend build on what has been said before and lead to what will be said in the following Rollos. Too often the Rollos are prepared as if they are stand alone presentations when, in fact, they should be seen as a total gift being delivered in different packages. Understanding this is of critically important on the Third Day, because at the end of this day, the whole gift is assembled. We all have experienced the frustration of trying to put something together only to find there are pieces missing. It is not only necessary for the team to understand this, the candidates need to be encouraged to listen to everything, knowing that it is one message, simply given over three days. Doing the posters following each Rollo is an effective way for the links between each Rollo to be made.

A joyful and confident transition to the Fourth Day is the natural result of a well presented Third Day. The Rollo that begins this process is another that was presented at last year's Conference, “The Cursillista After the Cursillo”. This Rollo was dropped long ago from the North American literature on which we in Canada have been so dependent. It is unclear as to why it was dropped, unless for the very poor excuse that there is no time for it. To quote our Founder again: to leave out this most important Rollo is like giving someone a jigsaw puzzle in a box with no picture. They have all the pieces, they have no idea how to put them together. Here is what he said in a letter to those responsible for making the changes to the Rollos in the official literature:

“We also observe that against our repeated requests against it, the update continues to support the absurd elimination of the “rollo” The Cursillista beyond the Cursillo” which is precisely the most lay “rollo” of the lot and which embraces the indispensable purpose of

centering the different encounters experienced during the three days, in the person himself, before stating the communal dimension of Group Reunion and Ultreya.

We have never heard a single good reason that validates this mutilation of the method, but a vague reference to lack of time, which is not at all justified, for if the method applied is the genuine one, there's time enough for everything planned."

The Cursillista after the Cursillo Rollo centers in the candidates all they have heard to this point in the Cursillo weekend. It is the guidepost to the Fourth Day, and the method that makes the Cursillo unique in its approach to how the Lay person is to live out his/her Fourth Day.

At this point in the weekend, when this Rollo is given, the candidates are ready to go back into the world. They are full of enthusiasm to be more Christ centered and Christ like. They want to pass on what they have learned to those in their own environments. This Rollo does not explain the method of Group Reunion and Ultreya but, when presented properly, sparks an interest in hearing about a concrete and effective method that will allow them to journey together, supported and encouraged by others on the journey. In doing this, they will find the best and most effective way to re-Christianize all of their environments.

Too often by the time we reach this point in our weekends, we are all too aware of the clock - which results in very important components of the weekend having been dropped. It sometimes seems as if from the moment our feet hit the floor on the morning of the Third Day, our focus is on being ready for the Clausura. This is where our Movement fails. Not that the method is flawed, it is our understanding of it and the way in which we live it and pass it on to the candidates that is sadly lacking.

Instead of presenting the method as Total Security, again a name change has resulted in a change in focus of the message, the emphasis has become focused on the "how to" rather than the "why". Instead of emphasizing the benefits, we hear about what it will cost. The Total Security Rollo was also presented last year and the reasons given why it is being suggested that we should return to the original Rollo. Too often candidates come away from the weekend with the impression they have "joined" Cursillo instead of finding a means of answering the call of their baptism. The Cursillo weekend is designed to move people from where they are, to where they can be. From individuals seeking some elusive thing, which will not satisfy their hunger, to joy-filled Christians journeying together. A Christianity in Action. The Cursillo builds a bridge between the doors of the Church and the world.

Making the Three Encounters, with self, with Christ, and with others, is the goal of the Three Days. If the messages is presented well, the candidates will have learned much about themselves. They will have encountered Jesus as he really is, and through Him, their image of God will have moved from someone who watches us like a policeman, to one who looks at us as a loving parent looks at their beloved child.

The Third Encounter, the encounter with others, makes Christianity in Action a reality. With the support and encouragement of the team, the new candidates join those already on the journey. The role of the leaders both on the Third Day and into the Fourth Day, is to shine a light along the path. It is not our job as leaders to force the new candidates into anything. Not our style of piety, not what we believe is study, and not our way of apostolic action. Our job as leaders is to allow them to see that what they have been told on the Three Days is, in fact possible. They can respond to the love they have experienced and they will find a community of love who will be there to support them. We must always be mindful of the

fact that God has called them to their own path. His grace will keep them on it if we are there to listen to them and encourage them.

Nothing supports and encourages more than the witness we give by how we live our own conversion. As I said last year, we say it best when we **say** nothing at all. Rather, we live what we say we believe. The new Cursillistas have listened to Rollistas who have not only shared a message in words, but that message has been seen as incarnate in the lives of those who have been leaders on the weekend.

The Encounter With Others is a journey outward. A journey on which we are called to serve one another. An ongoing journey towards understanding, compassion, acceptance and love. As I have looked back over the experience of my own Cursillo weekend, I am able to see more clearly how my life has been impacted by this meditation. I learned to stop measuring myself against others – comparing my weaknesses to their strengths. I have learned to accept my gifts and to strive to be the best at what I can be rather than wishing I could be more like someone else.

The Cursillo weekend, and especially the Third Day, helps to channel the enthusiasm that is generated by what has been lived and manifests itself in Christianity in Action. It outlines what we are called to do, and demonstrates that it is possible by living in friendship. The weekends are held so that there will be people to make Group Reunion. It is in Group Reunion that friendship is lived, where each one can be him or herself, where we find the support and encouragement necessary in order to live the Gospel in the everyday marketplace of life. We learn to live what we hope to share.

Let us be certain that each of us continues to not only speak the Good News, but to **be** the Good News. Living Gospels, journeying with each other on the way home to the Father.

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