

YOU AND YOUR POST-CURSILLO

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You say that you spent three days in a Cursillo House and that during those three days you made the Cursillo. That is true; but only to some extent.

The Cursillo is not just three days in a Cursillo House. The Cursillo is a long process, with three distinctive phases. The Pre-Cursillo, the Cursillo Proper and the Post-Cursillo.

The Pre-Cursillo is a preparation for the Cursillo Proper. Most probably you did not notice it; but a lot of attention was paid to your Pre-Cursillo. Many things were taken care of before you entered the Cursillo House: selection of candidates, offering of palancas, formation of Leaders' team, preparation of the material things needed in the Cursillo, technical and spiritual preparation of the Cursillo leaders, etc. All this was done to ensure the success of your Cursillo Proper.

It was only after a long and meticulous preparation that your Cursillo Proper started. The Cursillo Proper is well known to you. There is no need to talk about it now. The memory of those three unforgettable days is still very much alive in your mind.

After three days you left the Cursillo House. And you told everybody: "I have just made the Cursillo; I am a cursillista"... Other Cursillistas greeted you with "de colores!"... Relatives and friends congratulated you...

You were right... You were a cursillista...

But your Cursillo was by no means over...

The Cursillo Proper lasts three days. The Fourth Day—the Post-Cursillo—has no end. It lasts for life...

The Fourth Day is the most important day. The Post-Cursillo is the most important day. The Post-Cursillo is the most important phase of the Cur-

sillo. The three days in the Cursillo House were an introduction to the Post-Cursillo.

The Cursillo Proper was the beginning; the Post-Cursillo is the continuation of your life in grace and in the apostolate... The Cursillo Proper is the first step of a long walk that will end on the day of your death... Your Cursillo did not end with the Clausura... You are still making it.

The Cursillo Proper launched you into the Post-Cursillo, into the Life of *Ultreya*...

In medieval times Christians from all over Europe went on pilgrimages to the Tomb of the Apostle Saint James The Greater in Santiago de Compostela in Northwestern Spain. They came by ship, by land, on horseback, on foot... The trip was long, tiring and dangerous...

As the pilgrims travelled to Santiago they used to shout: *Ultreya!*...
Ultreya means *Onward!*...

It was their slogan. It was their battle cry... It was a cry of encouragement...; an invitation to go on, not to give up...

The Cursillo started as a Youth Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Young men and women from the four corners of Spain journeyed to Santiago in an unprecedented manifestation of Faith. And, on their way to the Tomb of the Apostle, they also cried: *Ultreya!*... *Onward!*...

That is how *Ultreya* and Santiago came to the Cursillo. This also explains why the shell, a Compostela pilgrim's symbol, is found on many Cursillo publications. And this is the reason why the Golden Cross has been adopted by Cursillistas.

The Golden Cross is a cross in the form of a sword. That is the Cross of the old Military Order of Santiago. The members of the Military Order of Santiago were soldiers who fought against the Moors in Spain for the christian reconquest of the Peninsula. At the same time they were monks who lived in monasteries. Hence the sword and the cross...

You are a soldier of Christ. You are fighting for God's cause. But your battles are not against temporal enemies. They are against the spiritual enemies of the soul. Your battles are not bloody. That is why your sword is not red—like the sword of the *Caballeros de Santiago*—but golden, perhaps to symbolize the rich harvest of souls that you gather for the Lord...

The Cursillo started as a pilgrimage. Cursillistas are pilgrims. You are a pilgrim...; not to Santiago de Compostela, but to the House of your Father, to Heaven...

The complete title of your Guide is *Guia del Peregrino* (A Pilgrim's Guide). On its first page it speaks to you of your Pilgrimage...

The same idea was beautifully expressed by your Patron, Saint Paul, when, speaking of the saints of the Old Testament who died before the Coming of Christ, he said:

All these died in faith, before receiving any of the things that had been promised, but they saw them in the far distance and welcomed them, recognizing that they were only strangers and nomads on earth. People who use such terms about themselves make it quite plain that they are in search of their real homeland. They can hardly have meant the country they came from, since they had the opportunity to go back to it; but in fact they were longing for a better homeland, their heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, since he had founded the city for them (Heb., 11, 13-16).

You are a stranger, a nomad on this earth... This world is not your permanent country... You are on your way to your homeland, to your "heavenly homeland"... You are on a pilgrimage to the City of God...

A pilgrimage is a long journey... And because it is long it is tiring... And because it is tiring it may be discouraging...

A pilgrimage has to be prepared in advance. If you intend to go to Rome, Lourdes or Fatima, you plan your trip for months. You apply for a passport, order a ticket, draw up an itinerary, make hotel reservations, etc... You try to foresee the difficulties and obstacles that you expect to meet, and get ready to face and solve them beforehand. In other words, you make sure that you reach your destination...

Your pilgrimage to heaven is long. Sometimes it is tiring; and sometimes it is discouraging...

This is the reason why the Post-Cursillo is so important. The purpose of the Post-Cursillo is to help you reach your destination... it intends to make sure that you are not lost on the way...

What happens to a pilgrim who starts out on his journey alone and without money and provisions?...

The Cursillo does not want that to happen to you...

The Cursillo Movement does not abandon a new Cursillista to his fate. The Cursillo is too much interested in your spiritual welfare to take any chances on it... And it has taken great pains in devising a method that will ensure your perseverance in the Life in Grace...

When you left the Cursillo House you were not sent back to the world alone...

Do you remember the rollo *Obstacles to the Life in Grace*?... It told you that you were in the Grace of God, but not confirmed in it; that it was possible for you to lose that Grace. The rollo told you about the enemies of your Grace, and how to defeat them.

Life in Grace explained to you the practices of Piety that will keep your spiritual life strong and your Grace ever increasing.

Total Security and *The Cursillista beyond the Cursillo* gave you practical rules on Post-Cursillo life.

This was the Method's answer to the questions that you were asking yourself in the Cursillo House: How am I going to keep the Grace and the happiness that I have just discovered?... what is going to happen to me when I go back to my old environment?... Shall I be able to live all my life as a Cursillista?...

Yes!... The Method told you... *You can persevere*...; and *you will*, if you make use of the means of perseverance given to you by the Cursillo...

This is not just talk... This is a promise; this is a guarantee... Not a one-two-year guarantee...; but a lifetime guarantee!...

But the guarantee carries a condition with it. And the condition is that you are faithful to the means of perseverance given to you...

Actually, everything depends on you...

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Which are these means of perseverance?...—You know them well. They were explained to you in the Cursillo. Let us recall them and go over them briefly...

The *Service Sheet* with its Practices of Piety... These are the practices of Piety that turned into saints those servants of God whom we now venerate on the altar. Those practices will keep you close to Christ, the source of your holiness. Union with Christ is the most important thing in the life of a Christian, of a Cursillista, of an apostle... Without that, we are nothing; and our apostolate will be fruitless...

Remember Christ's warning:

*As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself,
but must remain part of the vine,
neither can you unless you remain in me.
I am the vine,
you are the branches.*

*Whoever remains in me, with me in him,
bears fruit in plenty;
for cut off from me you can do nothing.
Anyone who does not remain in me
is like a branch that has been thrown away
—he withers... (Jn., 15, 4-6).*

Your Morning Offering, Meditation, Mass, Communion, Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Spiritual Direction, Retreat... will keep you constantly in the presence of God, always close to Him...; will make you a participant of His perfection, of His holiness, of His life...; will make you a saint...

Throw away your Service Sheet...; and soon you will be like a branch cut off from the tree... Your spiritual life will wither...

What is the fate of such a branch?...

Let Christ Himself tell You:

*these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, and
they are burnt... (Jn., 15,6).*

Do you want to know how you can avoid being such a branch?... Do you want to know how to make your Service Sheet, not only a remembrance of your Cursillo, but the guide of your spiritual life?... Do you want to know how to live always in union with Christ?...

Live in union with your brothers!... Keep in touch with them...

You need the company of a group of friends... You need the *Team Reunion*...

The Team Reunion is probably the most important means of perseverance in the Post-Cursillo...

The Team Reunion tries to attain two basic and fundamental purposes: to ensure our faithfulness to the Service Sheet, and therefore our union with Christ; and to give life and direction to our apostolate...

The fact that we have to report on our Service Sheet to a group of friends is a powerful incentive to live up to it... moreover, the members of a team—being, as they are, friends and brothers in Christ—are, with their words, example and prayers, a source of strength and encouragement for one another...

The Team Reunion discusses plans for group apostolate, finds the means to carry them out, reports and analyzes results... it also helps the members of the team in their individual apostolate ..

But, of course, only a well organized and well conducted Team Reunion can achieve all this. Perhaps some other day we shall have the opportunity to speak of this in more detail.

A Cursillista needs an environment that will help him preserve and increase his spirit of idealism, surrender and charity... He also needs further instruction in his religion...

In the Cursillo you learned many things about your Faith. But it is not possible to learn everything in three days. As they told you in the rollo *Study*, you have to deepen your knowledge of Christianity. You do it by reading books and journals, by attending classes and participating in discussions on Religion, etc.

However, that is not enough. The study of Religion should not be theoretical only, but practical as well... You should know how your brother Cursillistas *live* their Religion... You should benefit from their experience... And they should benefit from yours...

All this is done in the *Utreya*...

It is a big mistake to think that the *Utreya* is a luxury that can be dispensed with... In the life of a Cursillista the *Utreya* is a must...

Of course, here I am speaking of an *Utreya* that is conducted in accordance with the spirit and rules of the Cursillo...

Piety, Study and Action were the three pillars of your Cursillo... Piety, Study and Action (Service Sheet, *Utreya* and Team Reunion) are the pillars that will support the edifice of your Post-Cursillo...

If you don't want the edifice to collapse, make sure that its supporting pillars always stand erect and strong...

And please do not make the mistake of thinking that your Post-Cursillo can last without those three pillars... If you do, one of these days you might be in for an unpleasant surprise...

Aside from these three fundamental means of perseverance, the Cursillo Method provides you with other resources that are of great value in the pursuance and attainment of your Christian Ideal...

To remind him of his Cursillo, to renew his fervor and increase his enthusiasm, a Cursillista is invited to go back once in a while to where his

Pentecost took place, to the Cursillo House, and attend Openings, Mañanitas and Clausuras...

For the same purpose Cursillo affairs (annual commemoration of a Cursillo, Diocesan Cursillo Anniversaries, Conventions, etc...) are often organized... A Cursillista can benefit much from these and other Cursillo activities...

When you go on a long trip you stop once in a while to rest, to review your itinerary, to count your money, to make plans... On your pilgrimage to heaven you should also stop every now and then, to take an X-ray of your soul, to see if your Post-Cursillo goes according to plan, to find out if there is anything to correct or improve....

A *Spiritual Retreat* (annual, if possible) will give you the opportunity to do all this...

I am sure that you remember the Spiritual Director of your Cursillo. And most probably, you have a feeling of veneration for him... In him you found the guidance, the encouragement, the peace of mind you needed...

Spiritual Direction was essential in your Cursillo. It is of the utmost importance in your Post-Cursillo...

Spiritual Direction is not only for women... You, an intelligent man with strong ideas and deep-rooted opinions..., you need a Spiritual Director...

Don't you need a physician when you are sick?... Or a lawyer when you are confronted with a legal problem?... Doesn't a tourist need a guide?...

On your pilgrimage to heaven, you need a guide... In your Post-Cursillo you need a Spiritual Director...

But, of course, this does not mean that you have to go to see him every week... This does not mean that you cannot think for yourself or make your own conclusions...

This simply means that you should have a friend to whom you can go when you have a problem which you cannot solve, a question that you cannot answer...; when you are in doubt, when you don't know what to do...

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When you were introduced to Mr. Utilitarian, Mr. Superstitious, Mr. Machine and Mr. Pharisee... you laughed. And you decided that you did not want to be like any of them. You thought they were ugly characters...

In the Post-Cursillo there are also characters that are not very attractive... Cursillistas speak of them; and often they joke about them...

Mr. Mañanita: The Cursillista who never misses a mañanita, but who does not care about his Service Sheet...

Mr. Opening: he is always there, to cheer for new Cursillistas; but don't ask him where he attends Ultreyas...

Mr. Clausura: he never fails to be at the head of the line for the "de colores" embrace; but he does not know what Team Reunion means...

We could add more to the list:

Mr. Combo: he has all sorts of musical instruments adorned with the Golden Cross. He goes from Cursillo House to Cursillo House playing with his Combo... But does he take any time out to learn more about his Faith?...

Mr. "De Colores": he is always singing "De Colores", greeting everybody "de colores, brad!"...; he even belongs to a "de colores" club... But does he *live* "de colores"?...

Mr. Golden Cross: you can see the Golden Cross all over him; on his lapel, on his neck tie, on his ring, in his car... But is his heart always golden?...

Sometimes people ask if it is true that all a Cursillista is supposed to do is to go to mañanitas or sing "de colores"... And they say that there isn't much in that...—They are right!... There isn't much in that...

Why do they ask this question?...—Because that is what they see in *some* Cursillista...

Now you yourself may wish to ask a question:

Is there anything wrong with attending Openings, Mañanitas, Clausuras?... Is there anything wrong with playing in a combo, greeting other Cursillistas with "de colores", treasuring the Golden Cross?...

Of course not!... There is nothing wrong with that...

as long as *that is not all* a Cursillista does...

as long as *he is not* Mr. Mañanita, Mr. Combo, Mr.....,

as long as he *lives* as a Cursillista.....

as long as he makes use of the means of perseverance given to him by the Cursillo....

as long as he understands the meaning of *first things first!*...

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There are Cursillistas who are not quite convinced of the necessity of the Post-Cursillo. They say that they can keep their life in Grace and carry out their apostolic activities without the Service Sheet, Team Reunion, Ultreya...

I am not going to argue the point. Perhaps they can... But I hope they don't mind a few comments on this...

The Post-Cursillo is the most important phase of the Cursillo. The means of perseverance explained above are an essential part of the Post-Cursillo, and therefore, of the Cursillo itself... Not to pay attention to them is the same as to abandon the Cursillo...

A Cursillista who does not care about his Post-Cursillo cannot in truth be called a Cursillista... He has spent three days in a Cursillo House; but *he is not* a Cursillista...

It is understandable that in the enthusiasm that follows his Cursillo, a Cursillista might think that he knows everything, that he is strong enough, that he can take care of everything, that he does not need the help of anybody...

But, without these means of perseverance, how long can that enthusiasm and that strength going to last?...

The initial fervor will soon cool off, the emotion fade away, the enthusiasm dampen... And then what?...

A Cursillista who does not live his Post-Cursillo in the way the Method envisions it might keep his life in Grace... But, again, for how long?...

He is already a *fall-out* from the Cursillo because he does not live his Post-Cursillo... How long will it be before he becomes a *fallen-away* from the life in Grace?...

He may begin as a *brown-out*... and end up as a *black-out*...

Black is black... they sing... Wouldn't such a Cursillista feel like singing: "I want my Grace back"?... I hope he does...; and that *actually* he gets it back... Otherwise, the current joke "as it was in the beginning"... might apply to him...

Brother, would you like this to be the climax of *your* Cursillo?...

The founders of the Cursillo Movement thought of this... They thought of you... And, in order to make sure that your Cursillo does not end up in smoke, they devised the Post-Cursillo...

You trusted them when you made the Cursillo... Trust them now... Rely on their long experience...

Be faithful to the Post-Cursillo, and your *past* will forever be past, never *present* again... You may fall occasionally — you are not confirmed in Grace!—; but you will always have the strength to stand up and continue your pilgrimage...

A Cursillista without his means of perseverance in the Post-Cursillo is like a soldier without a gun. When the enemy attacks, what is there for him to do except to run or to fall a prisoner?...

You may say: There are many non-Cursillistas who live in the Grace of God and who do apostolic work without the Cursillo... Why can't I do the same?...

I repeat: I am not going to argue the point... Perhaps you can...; maybe you can...; I am sure you can...

But now let me ask you another question: *Should you?*...

When you became a Cursillista you decided to adopt the Cursillo as the instrument to attain your personal sanctification and to carry out your apostolic vocation... Why are you backing out now?...

Moreover, your brother Cursillistas need you, your help, your enthusiasm, your encouragement... The Cursillo needs you!...

The Cursillo has done much for you!... Are you going to leave it out in the cold now?... Would that be fair?...