

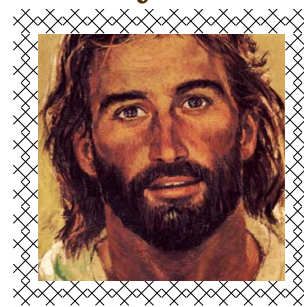
Christ is counting on you - what do you respond?

THE SPONSOR

A Cursillo Newsletter



May 2017



CHRIST IS
COUNTING ON
YOU...

Eight New Sisters in Christ

Last weekend I had the privilege of being the Rectora for the Spring Women's Cursillo weekend. Over the weekend, I watched them all do their part – listen, discuss, sing and pray. My part was basically to watch over the schedule, welcome speakers, and support them in their journey. It was probably the easiest leadership role I have been involved in so far. I have no illusions that it will always be this easy, but I thank God for the experience and for the growth in my own faith.

At the end of the weekend, I had the responsibility of giving what, to me, has become the most important talk of the weekend – Total Security. This final talk revolves around what I have started to call “Spiritual Aftercare” – letting the candidates know that their Fourth Day begins after the weekend and that they need to become involved in their local groups and Ultreya. I would like to share part of that talk with you who are reading this newsletter, and remind you also about “Spiritual Aftercare”. This is what I told the women on the weekend:

*What is supposed to happen after we leave this place? How do I keep this alive? If all I have of this weekend is a pleasant memory, how will that bring those I love closer to Jesus? The answer is -- If all I KEEP of this weekend is the pleasant memory, it won't do a thing! If I keep this all to myself and bottled up, I will not continue to grow in my love of Jesus. **I may go to heaven all by myself.** Do I want that, or do I want to bring others along with me? Can I do this all by myself? Or do I want to continue to fill up this inner fountain of goodness and mercy to share with others?*

Yes, there ARE answers to these questions, and there is hope!

Our Cursillo will not and should not end here this afternoon. The beauty of Cursillo is that we have aftercare! In my business of addiction, it's not enough to just get people to stop using. If you know someone who has an addiction, you know that sometimes there are setbacks. In the addiction field, the best way to continue in a healthy lifestyle is to surround ourselves with like-minded clean and sober people who have the same goals as we do – to continue to grow in recovery. If I have an addiction, I cannot go back to my former lifestyle. I might have to go to meetings, I most likely will have to talk to someone who is further along in recovery and learned new ways to live their life. I will need support. In the business, we call that effort to continue in recovery to be a type of aftercare.

Like I mentioned before, Cursillo has the answer to how we will continue to grow and refill this inner fountain. That answer is called the Group Reunion and Ultreya. It offers a method that will ensure you have Total Security for the rest of your life. This method teaches us how to persevere in our walk with Christ, and how to do this with the support of your new sisters in Christ – all of us here, and all those who are waiting for us at home.

We call it Total Security, but WHAT DO WE WANT TO SECURE?

This weekend, the Holy Spirit has shown us His blessings. Just like walking in a beautiful garden, we have walked and discovered bright, beautiful fruits. They are full of color, full of life, our taste buds explode with joy.

Invite someone to Ultreya—Monday May 22 —7pm
Dominican Room - Basilica - Rosary starts at 6:30pm

Here at Cursillo we have walked in the garden of the fruits of the Spirit - We read about them in the letter to the Galatians: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23) These fruit grow within us and we become available to share them with each other.

If we think of our spiritual lives right now as the garden - On Thursday we tilled the soil with our silent reflection, reading and prayer. Friday we planted the seeds that grew lush and green because they were fertilized on Saturday. Today, we begin to see the blossoms that indicate that the fruit is beginning. Now we continue to give the garden water and fertilizer in the form of the Eucharist and Scripture reading. Then we pollinate it with the encouragement of others! If anyone has had a garden, they know that it doesn't just magically grow on it's own – it takes effort on our part! Our security is strengthened by the fruit of the Spirit.

We absolutely need each other to maintain our Life in Grace. Just like the addicted person who “tries to go it alone”, it gets really difficult to survive without hearing from others in recovery, and getting knowledge as well as feedback and encouragement.

Group reunion is the place and the means by which our Life in Grace continues to grow. This is where we hope to become saints! Many years ago, my husband and I were involved in the Engaged Encounter weekends – a place where young couples came to prepare for marriage. We told them that one of their goals in marriage is to bring their spouses to Christ and to help each other become saints in heaven. Here in Cursillo we are asking each other for the same thing – a place where we can help each other become saints. Our Christianity becomes more real and our faith becomes stronger. We become the Apostles that Brother Jesus calls us to be for each other.

We come together in a small group of 3 to 6 people on a regular basis – preferably weekly – to learn how to grow in Grace. We might come together for coffee, just as friends sometimes do, and develop our friendship with each other through Christ. It is a Reunion of “wannabe saints” – helping each other along that path. Remember that Jesus said “where two or three are gathered in My name, THERE I AM IN THEIR MIDST”. This is exactly what we have been doing here this weekend at our small groups at table, isn't it?

At our small Group Reunions, there is a format that we use that helps us to focus and share. Why do we need a format? Well you know as well as I do, if I don't have something to focus on, I can get lost in tangents. Sometimes those tangents are distractions and they take me away from what I really want to accomplish in this meeting. The format gives us three basic steps in sharing the Grace of the week, and they all reflect back to what we have learned here this weekend.

First we discuss our life of Piety, and I give an example of how my faith has been affected by Jesus this week, and a special moment when I feel closest to Christ.

Next we move on to Study. We are challenged to find ways to grow in the knowledge of our faith and share how this has helped us to know God better and understand His gift. Then we put it all together in Action – how have I

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Men's Cursillo Weekends 2017— September 28-October 1

Women's Cursillo Weekends 2017—October 26-29

WEEKEND REUNION—Everyone come and welcome our new brothers and sisters in Christ—SUNDAY JUNE 11— 1 to 4pm—St Charles in Brunswick

Lewiston-Auburn Ultreya—FOURTH Monday of each month



tried to be a “little apostle” over the past week.

For the small group reunion to reach its goal of helping us to be saints and little apostles, it needs to accomplish a few things. First, it needs to meet on a regular basis – weekly is best. Don’t think about it as another meeting that you need to attend – think of it as a time of worship and growth, like you would think of time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. It is a time to hear Jesus speak to me through my friends. I need to hear Him for my garden of faith and spiritual fruit to grow.

This is a time of joyful sharing of the life of Grace. Maybe I have a dry spell once in a while, but when I get together with my friends and hear about their life of Grace, I am inspired to try again this coming week and look for spiritual fruit.

It is a place where I can trust my sisters with my struggles. This is one of those safe places where I and each one of us keep our sharing confidential. We all have been in situations where we have been uncomfortable because someone is sharing things that are none of our business. We are safe here – we share with each other and don’t break that trust by telling others outside the group what is going on with any particular person.

It is also a place where I can be me – the real me – faults and all. I can be authentic and I can trust that you will be real with me as well. This is what Jesus expects from us – not facades and masks, but to be the one that He has made and is changing me to be. Together as a group, we are friends who give ourselves to each other in trust, and we bring each other in prayer to Christ. We live the motto of Cursillo with each other: Make a Friend, BE a friend, Bring that friend to Christ.

There is more to the Cursillo method. In our small groups, we talk to each other about the ways that Jesus is becoming real to us week by week. Once a month, our small groups come together at the Ultreya – a meeting of the groups. This is the larger local Christian community coming together.

Let’s look at what an Ultreya is supposed to be.

It is first of all, Ultreya is the place where we build community among all of the groups, which keeps the spirit and the friendships alive. We get together with an attitude that here we are, living our individual lives, sharing in a small group, getting together to encourage and hear the bigger story of what Jesus is doing in our community. This is also a place where new people can become integrated and become members of small groups. The mission of the Ultreya is together to bring Jesus into the world. We meet and grow and have apostolates that show the world how to live as Christians. The Scripture gives us the example in Acts about how people saw “how they love one another”.



Ultreya is a larger version of our small group reunions. You will notice these again on the Group Reunion Sheets – we start with the prayer to the Holy Spirit and we break down into smaller groups for a short time. At our Ultreya in Lewiston, we will count off to form our small group, and these give us an opportunity to share community with more people. We discuss our prayer, study and action from the past month, as well as our moments closest to Christ.

Then we usually have a Witness talk – someone is prepared to speak about how their Christian life is going, how Jesus is blessing their prayer and how He is working in their lives. Usually this is no more than 10 minutes. For example, one person shared recently in our Ultreya how the Lord strengthened them through Lent when his spouse spent time in Intensive Care because of a systemic infection. We were all encouraged and inspired to persevere in our prayer and life in the Lord. The purpose of the witness talk is to encourage others in this perseverance.

Finally in some Ultreyas who are fortunate enough to have a priest or Sister as part of their group, this Spiritual

Advisor may take a few minutes to provide some spiritual direction for the group on what has been shared that evening.

We take about 10 minutes to pray together for each other's intentions, we sing DeColores, and then we socialize with snacks for a few minutes before we go home to live out the message we've heard that evening. Some groups do their closing prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament if available.

The best part of the whole evening is the joy of getting together and encouraging each other. Everyone is struggling with something, and when we share our moments with Christ with each other, we share hope. One of the moments closest to Christ are times when I am inspired to do something on a whim. I just looked up some acronyms for HOPE and I would like to share them with you. This is what Ultreya does for me:



HOPE

Having Only Positive Expectations

His Organized Plan Excels

Hold On, Pain Ends

He Offers Peace Everyday

Holding On, Praying Expectantly

Home Of Personal Encouragements

Ultreya is the place where friendships are built and shared. The goal is to facilitate our encounters with Jesus and share them with each other, where everyone is welcomed and become partners in the journey. We bring to the group our faults and failures as well as the graces and glory that Jesus has shared with us.

Remember that this is a service we give to each other, this is not a structure that we impose on people. This is Cursillo's program of Spiritual Aftercare – the follow-up to the weekend. Christ is counting on us to lift each other up and bring HOPE into the world around us, and where we will find Total Security. I hope to see you there!

This is an invitation to all of you who have not been to Ultreya for a while, to come Home. We've seen the banners and ads that invite "Catholics Come Home" for those who have been away for a while. I am asking you today, how is Your Christian recovery program coming along? We all need help to become saints and little apostles, and are called to bring each other closer to Brother Christ.

Be brave this month. Come to Ultreya, join a small group. You need us, and we need you. If you need information on small groups, contact any of the board members listed on the second page of this newsletter and we will work to find you a group that will strengthen you. If the schedules aren't right, we will dig in and help you set up a group with others on your schedule. Listen:

An Invitation to Grace – Isaiah 55:1-7

1 All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, buy grain and eat; Come, buy grain without money, wine and milk without cost! 2 Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what does not satisfy? Only listen to me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. 3 Pay attention and come to me; listen, that you may have life. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the steadfast loyalty promised to David. 4 As I made him a witness to peoples, a leader and commander of peoples, 5 So shall you summon a nation you knew not, and a nation that knew you not shall run to you, Because of the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you. 6 Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake their way, and sinners their thoughts; Let them turn to the LORD to find mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving.

