Preface

The Episcopal Cursillo Spiritual Advisor's Workbook is one of a series of publications developed to provide an Episcopal approach to Cursillo. It has been planned as a reference and guide for clergy involved in any aspect of leadership in the Cursillo Movement.

The term used to describe such clergy, especially those assisting on weekends, has been “spiritual director.” Although this has not created any confusion, it is a misleading term. The clergy perform tasks in addition to spiritual direction and therefore will be called “spiritual advisors.”

The Spiritual Advisor's Workbook and the Lay Talk Workbook are complementary volumes that together provide guidelines and talk outlines for the conduct of a basic three-day Cursillo weekend.
The principles behind this present volume come from "An Outline of the Faith," (the catechism) found in The Book of Common Prayer; and the license agreement between the National Secretariat of the Cursillo Movement (Roman Catholic) and the National Episcopal Cursillo Committee.

The license agreement has been interpreted to include the following:

- A diocesan movement within the Episcopal Church must have the approval of the local Episcopal bishop and must be recognized by and affiliated with the National Episcopal Cursillo Committee.
- The Episcopal expression of Cursillo must be faithful to the purpose of the movement and follow the guidance provided in The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement; by the National Episcopal Cursillo Committee; and in the established National By-Laws of the National Episcopal Cursillo.
- Each diocesan movement must have a representative group called a secretariat for overseeing with the bishop the work of Cursillo in the diocese. This includes applying the three-day Cursillo weekend properly (use of approved talk outlines and three-day weekends put on by an Episcopal team for Episcopal participants).

For more about the license agreement, see Appendix 1.

The Catechism in The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that the ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons. An appreciation of and an emphasis on the ministry of the laity is one of the strong, positive elements of the Cursillo movement. However, the ministry of the clergy as spiritual advisors is vital and necessary. It is a servant ministry, and it is to assist those servants of the various Episcopal Cursillo communities in the doing of that ministry that this workbook has been prepared.

We offer this book as an act of loving service to you, and for the praise and glory of God.

The National Episcopal Cursillo Committee The Feast of St. Mary the Virgin, 1984

**The Cursillo Movement**

Cursillo (the name means "a short course") is one method of renewal of the Church. It has come to us from the Spanish Roman Catholic Church. The purpose of the Cursillo movement is to convert Christians to a deeper relationship with God and to help them to understand their individual callings to be Christian leaders. This leadership may be in their work situations, in their family and social lives, in their leisure activities, or within the institutional church. The goal is nothing less than to Christianize the world through the apostolic action of Christian leaders in all areas of human activity.

There are three equally important parts of the Cursillo method:

1. The identification of potential environments or social situations to be penetrated by the Gospel, and potential leaders within those environments;
2. The three-day Cursillo weekend, which is what most people involved in the movement would describe if you inquired about Cursillo;
3. And the special Cursillo follow-up support system.

In the first part of the Cursillo process those who have already made a threeday weekend identify various environments which need to be further Christianized, seek out potential
leaders in those environments, and encourage them to consider the goals and methods of Cursillo. When these people feel that the time is right for them to participate, they ask to be sponsored for the three-day Cursillo weekend.

During the weekend, the second part of the process, a team of lay persons and spiritual advisors give a series of talks covering the basics of Christianity and centering on the mission concepts of prayer, study, and action. Away from the everyday pressures of their lives, the participants form a Christian community, learning, praying, sharing, singing, and living together. During this time apart they learn about Cursillo's special two-part support system for Christian leaders.

The third part of the Cursillo method is this support system, which includes two primary elements:

1. Frequent small group meetings (called group reunions) with a few friends for mutual encouragement and support in the life of grace;
2. Area meetings (called ultreyas) with others who have made a Cursillo weekend or who might be interested in doing that. Here they can share, worship, and learn, so that the Church and their own faith may be built up.

The three-day weekend, which may be life transforming, fulfills its purpose best when people return to their regular round of work, family, and parish activities, but now supported by fellow Christians in this specific framework of meetings.

Such special terms as pre-Cursillo, post-Cursillo, Fourth Day, ultreya, and group reunion, reflect the roots of the movement and the tendency to organize an idea into a movement. They provide efficient communication for those who understand them. The terms and phrases in conversation may, however, become instruments of separation when used in front of those who have not attended a three-day Cursillo weekend. This should be of concern to spiritual advisors so that the Cursillo movement continues to be a creative and renewing force in the Church and not a divisive one.

Appendix 2 lists definitions of these terms.

**Part 1: The Spiritual Advisor**

**Who Should Be a Spiritual Advisor?**

A spiritual advisor within the Cursillo movement and especially on the three-day weekend has many roles to fill and tasks to perform, demanding many gifts. Those who select spiritual advisors for weekends and ultreyas need to understand the demands placed on a spiritual advisor and prayerfully fill their team openings with qualified people. This part of the workbook sets forth these tasks, roles and demands.

When selecting a spiritual advisor, there are a few musts. To be a spiritual advisor on a weekend, the person under consideration must be an Episcopal deacon, priest, bishop or religious; must have participated in an Episcopal or Roman Catholic three-day and fifteen-talk weekend, and must be committed to the Cursillo method.

Because of the need for spiritual direction on weekends and at ultreyas, one role that a spiritual advisor fills is that of a spiritual director. To provide spiritual direction, a person must have self-knowledge and must have wrestled with his or her own spiritual growth. Because this kind of activity is done best with a coach or friend, it is desirable that anyone acting as a spiritual advisor be under spiritual direction. Beyond that, a spiritual
advisor acting as spiritual director needs to be able to stand by and lend support to others; able to accept others unconditionally where they are; able to help others maintain perspective by asking hard questions like “Why?” and, “What are you really doing in this situation?” and, “Is what you are doing leading to unity with Christ?”

**Before the Weekend**

**Cursillo and the Diocese**

We have already noted that a diocesan movement within the Episcopal Church must have the approval of the local bishop. The decision to utilize Cursillo in any diocese may be made sometimes without full knowledge or understanding of the movement, but certainly it is done always with hope and prayer that it will be a creative force and fit in with the long-range planning of the diocese. The "precise application of the work of the Cursillo movement is done within the context of a pastoral plan. " According to the Leaders' Manual, "As part of the pastoral plan, the secretariat studies the environments of the diocese and determines which ones are to be given a high priority. The work of the pre-Cursillo is then directed toward the environments which have been given a high priority. In the pre-Cursillo, the persons and groups who should make the three-day exercise are identified, and they are prepared for the Cursillo weekend, keeping in mind they are ultimately being prepared to carry on the work of evangelization in their key environments in the post-Cursillo." [Leaders' Manual, copyright 1981 by The National Secretariat of the Cursillo Movement in the United States and Gerald P. Hughes, p. 33]

Because the bishop will need assistance in overseeing the work of Cursillo, you may be asked to serve as the bishop's representative on one of several groups:

- **Steering Committee** - a group of people initially formed to study the movement and to establish it within the diocese. In some places this function may be performed by the servant community.

- **Servant Community** (sometimes called leaders' school or service group) - a group that continues the work of the steering committee in studying the movement, training leaders, and encouraging the use of the Cursillo method.

- **Secretariat** - the group which eventually becomes responsible for all aspects of the movement's functioning. Its membership comes from the group of trained leaders and it delegates some of its work to the servant community which it oversees.

Selection of environments to receive the Gospel message is a matter for prayerful consideration. Needs and resources vary from place to place and time to time. How the movement comes to be in this area or that diocese is truly the work of the Holy Spirit.

**Choosing Participants**

The goal in selecting participants for a Cursillo weekend is to find those who are able to derive from Cursillo what it has to give and who will be likely to reach out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Minimal expectations are that a participant be:

1. A baptised member of the Christian Church
2. An active participant in an Episcopal church community
3. Open and willing to take part in group reunion
4. In good health, physically able to take part in the weekend
5. Able and willing to be in a communal living situation for the weekend
6. Potentially an influence in his or her regular environment
7. Receptive and inquiring
8. Resident or working in or near a Cursillo community
9. Not to be, or have recently been in, a personal crisis

In addition, spiritual advisors and parish clergy must be aware that there are some things that Cursillo is not. Therefore, possible participants must be discouraged from applying when their reasons for attending are not congruent with Cursillo purposes.

**Cursillo is not:**
1. A "problem solving" weekend for persons in serious personal or moral crisis situations
2. An evangelistic weekend for persons who are non-Christian (that is, not baptized) or anti-Christian, or merely "searchers after truth"
3. A part of the human-potential, group encounter, or personal improvement movements.

**The Weekend**

**Team Selection**

Each diocesan movement has a team selection process, but there are some general expectations of all potential team members. Each team member must

1. Be a member in good standing of the Episcopal Church
2. Be actively committed to building up Christian community (a contributor of time, talent, and treasure)
3. Have completed an authentic Cursillo weekend (three-day, fifteen-talk)
4. Understand, be committed to, and actively working the Cursillo method.
5. Have personal flexibility and be able to bear the strains of the weekend
6. Not be in, or have recently been in, a personal crisis.
7. Be practicing a lifestyle that demonstrates Christian standards.
8. Make a commitment to be present at all team meetings and throughout the weekend.

If there are any questions or problems regarding the selection of a team member, please refer to your local secretariat, who in turn may wish to consult with the diocesan bishop.

**Team Formation**

Team training, formation, and preparation are accomplished through leaders' school, preparation seminars, and team meetings. Team preparation includes community building. The team members need to get to know one another, accept and respect one another, and love one another in Christ, who is the builder of that community. They need to come to think and speak of themselves affectionately. This takes time and patience. It is a spiritual advisor's responsibility to assist and participate in the process of community building.

The weekend has been described as presenting a single long talk with many different
parts. To help others appreciate this statement, spiritual advisors should be prepared to weave the key ideas of the talks, meditations, and activities together in a single presentation for the entire team. The purpose of this is to demonstrate that each talk and every action on the weekend is a thread in the total fabric that makes up the teaching of the weekend. In Appendix 3 of this workbook and in the Lay Talk Workbook (pp. 13-19) you will find additional material that may be helpful. During team preparation, spiritual advisors are responsible (along with lay leadership) for critiquing all talks to ensure that they are consistent with Episcopal doctrine and the Cursillo method.

**Liturgy**

The chief spiritual advisor on a weekend has responsibility for each of the celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. The themes and music for these celebrations should be planned well in advance. The themes for the Eucharist normally will relate to the overall theme of the particular day of the weekend. The chief spiritual advisor and the assistant spiritual advisors will also work out in advance who will preside at each Eucharist.

The spiritual advisors, with the help of the other team members, will want to select and invite lay persons to act as lectors, leaders of the prayers of the people, and oblationers. Ordained participants may be invited to read the Gospel and administer the Sacrament.

The spiritual advisor also has the responsibility for ensuring that all things necessary for the liturgies are provided and, when necessary, that they are properly stored or returned at the conclusion of the weekend.

**Blessing and Distribution of Crosses**. Note: *There is a wide diversity of practices with regard to the material in this section. Please read it with this note in mind.*

The tradition of distributing a cross to each participant during the weekend has in some dioceses been given the name apostolic hour. This name conveys the nature of the recommitment when the chief spiritual advisor presents the cross and says, "Christ is counting on you!" and the participant may reply, "And I on Him."

This simple ceremony takes a variety of forms from community to community. Some have incorporated it in the Sunday Eucharist; others, having eliminated the Sunday morning Eucharist, have included it in a Fourth Day Eucharist. Some have done this as a group of team and participants just after the break-in or Sunday serenade; others include it as a part of the closing.

Whatever form it takes, the spiritual advisor has the responsibility for blessing the crosses and distributing them and service sheets to each participant. When the ceremony is separate from the Eucharist or the closing, it is appropriate for a spiritual advisor to explain the apostolic hour, read an appropriate Scripture lesson (mission theme or continuing union with Christ), and give a brief homily on the lesson. This is done before the distribution of the crosses and service sheets. Close with prayer or other devotions.

**Service**

Service for the clergy on a Cursillo weekend can be many things. Because people on a weekend are relative strangers to each other, service initially may mean just being there. The friendly engagement, the chat over a cup of coffee - all are a ministry of presence.

For many candidates, the Cursillo weekend may be the first opportunity that they have had to know a priest or deacon as a friend, as a trusted brother or sister in Christ. It is that
relationship, new or renewed, which often opens the door for the ongoing practice of spiritual direction.

This ministry of presence develops and grows into a new thing, in the more formal setting of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where private confession and limited individual counselling may take place. Perhaps one of the greatest and most practical opportunities for spiritual direction on the weekend is in helping the participants complete their Rule of Life service sheets. Here a great deal of skill is required to help candidates develop a personal realistic rule of life.

Because of these varied opportunities for direction on the weekend and because of the intensity of the experience, spiritual advisors should arrive rested, having made prayerful preparation. Reading, conferences with other skilled spiritual advisors, or courses in spiritual direction offered by seminaries or diocesan training centers are also helpful. Being under spiritual direction is highly desirable.

Teaching

Specific mention of the role of the clergy as teachers is easy to overlook in a book that contains so much teaching material. Let this short section be a reminder that teaching, along with liturgy and service, is one of the spiritual advisor's tasks.

Checklist of Responsibilities

Each spiritual advisor on the weekend has specific responsibilities:

1. Be available for spiritual counsel as needed by the rector and team before and during the weekend.
2. Give the theological presentations in accordance with the meditation and talk commentaries, of what it means to live the Christian life of grace.
3. Share in the liturgy, liturgical planning, and preaching.
4. Provide spiritual counsel and opportunities for conferences and confessions during the weekend.
5. Give candidates who come for counsel some kind of model for what is possible in the Fourth Day; encourage them to formulate a simple rule of life and find help in carrying it out, and encourage them to seek regular spiritual guidance or companionship as a useful support to the Christian life.
6. Encounter one another, the team, and participants as friends, and endeavor to continue that relationship following the weekend through group reunion, ultreya, closings, palanca, etc.

The chief spiritual advisor has these additional responsibilities:

1. Discuss with the rector plans for each team meeting; in particular, help decide who will do the Talk Flow Presentation, make arrangements for Eucharist, and help the rector with any special problems.
2. Assign the spiritual advisors' talks and meditations, and decide who will celebrate the weekend Eucharists.
3. Set up, or help the rector decide how to set up, the chapel for the weekend, and participate in decisions about who will bring all that is needed for worship services.
4. Listen attentively during all the talks to ensure that all essential points are covered and that connections between the talks are made; and, if necessary, in partnership with the rector, decide how to fill in the gaps; or arrange that another speaker do so.

5. Be the rector's spiritual guide in whatever style seems most appropriate.

After the Weekend

Post-Cursillo is all that follows your own weekend. This rest-of-your-life tends to be filled with all the same ordinary things and activities as before the weekend. One hoped-for difference is a new commitment to Christ, renewal that is acted out within the framework of the normal Christian community. For most of us, this is the parish family. Although we return to the ordinary, there is an extraordinary dimension for many as they seek out others for fellowship, with Christ, in permanent group reunion and ultreya. Spiritual advisors are encouraged to become a part of a small group of friends (group reunion) that shares the Christ-life. The group provides support through prayer, listening, counsel, and accountability. A spiritual advisor has no unique role to play or job to do that is any different from that of others in the group. For a more detailed description, see Appendix 4 entitled "Permanent Group Reunion."

It is for ultreya meetings that spiritual advisors may be called on to participate in a special way. An ultreya meeting is intended to be brief, joyful, and Christ-centered. Brief means approximately an hour as described in Appendix 5, entitled "About Ultreya." Within this framework the advisor has two responsibilities:

- To be available during the first half hour for people who need to confer about finding spiritual direction or who want to make arrangements for later, more lengthy counsel. Occasionally this may also involve on-the-spot dealing with problems which can't wait, or which are making it difficult for a person to participate and allow others to participate in the usual activity of the ultreya. If there is none of this work to do, then the spiritual advisor joins a floating group reunion.

- After the lay witness talk and the brief responses to it, the advisor gives a five-minute Gospel summary, applying some incident of Jesus' life or teaching to what has been said in the witness talk and responses. It helps to learn ahead of time from the lay speaker some idea of what the talk is to be about. For a bit more detail about this task, see "Guidelines for Ultreya Speakers," which is included in Appendix 5.

Part 2: The Meditations

The meditations are an integral part of the total message of the weekend and serve two purposes: First, they are intended to aid the participants in selfreflection and in awareness of their relationship to God. Second, they are intended to provide a model for continued meditation as a means of deepening that relationship beyond the weekend.

The difference between the meditations and the talks is that the former are not primarily content oriented. Instead of scoring particular points, they are intended to raise questions, and in this way begin to move the participants to realize that they need more in the way of a relationship with God than they now have. In order to achieve this end, the meditations should be given in an atmosphere of unhurried, gentle intimacy, and not as
lectures or Bible study. The meditations should be straightforward and give evidence of the spiritual advisor's own prayerful reflection. The meditations are based largely on single Bible texts (with the exception of the "Three Glances of Christ"). As the spiritual advisor works through each episode, he or she demonstrates a very valuable method for future application in approaching the Bible. The Bible pericopes used are not intended to provide merely proof-texts for points the speaker wishes to make. The motivation must be to open the living word of God up to the participants so that that Word may shed light on their present lives and their God-given potential as they live in grace.

The meditations must not be underestimated in their effects on the participants. In many ways the meditations set the tone for the weekend and provide a much needed opportunity within each day for quiet and prayerful reflection. The meditations should not be rushed, nor should the attitude be conveyed that they are somehow not as important as the talks that follow. In all cases, ample time should be allowed for quiet reflection following the presentation (not less than ten minutes).

In summary, the meditations are:

1. Based on the Word of God
2. Searching yet simple
3. Initiators of personal reflection
4. Models for further growth

*Note: The Meditation and Clergy Rollo outlines may be found in the “Rollo Room” folder.*

**Appendices**

**1. Roman Catholic/Episcopal Cursillo Agreement**

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NATIONAL CURSILLO SECRETARIAT (ROMAN CATHOLIC) AND THE NATIONAL EPISCOPAL CURSILLO COMMITTEE - MARCH 1980

The terms under which the agreement was formulated are as follows:

1. The National Episcopal Cursillo Movement is the responsible body for the movement within the Episcopal Church in the United States of America. It shall be charged with overseeing the movement in the Episcopal Church and with ensuring that the terms of the agreement are kept.

2. In order to have unity in the expression of the mentality of the founders of the Cursillo Movement, and to provide a criterion as to what constitutes an authentic movement in a diocese, the following shall serve as basic norms:

   a. It must have the approval of the local Episcopal bishop and be affiliated with the National Episcopal Cursillo Committee. Such affiliation will imply an association within the provinces as established by National Episcopal Cursillo Committee and the right to use the name.

   b. It should be faithful to the essence and purpose of the movement and operative in its three phases of precursillo, 3-Day Cursillo and postcursillo, following the

c. It should have a community of leaders, both clergy and lay, responsible for implementing the method properly, with particular attention to the postcursillo needs of the cursillistas. This community of service should meet regularly to (1) accelerate the progressive conversion of its own members as individuals, in the leaders' community itself, and in the movement as a whole; and (2) to promote the evangelization of environments.

d. It should have a small representative group called a secretariat, coresponsible with the bishop for overseeing the work of the movement in the diocese. The secretariat should apply the 3-Day Cursillo properly, according to general practice (free from improper adaptations), using the approved talk outlines, for a period of not less than three days, to candidates of the same faith (i.e. Episcopal), by an Episcopal team that is exemplary in its own living experience of the Christian life and the Cursillo method.

In addition, the National Episcopal Cursillo Committee agrees that the program

1. Will not be used for proselytizing.
2. Will not be exported internationally without the prior approval of the National Secretariat.
3. Promises to abide by the decisions of the National Secretariat in any matters of dispute which might arise in the aforementioned terms.

2. Definitions

**APOSTOLIC ACTION**: action planned to bring someone or some situation closer to Christ: involves words as well as deeds and the witness of a Christian life.

**CLAUSURA**: closing ceremony. In Cursillo, refers to the last service of the weekend, when, together with members of the Fourth Day community, we reaffirm our baptismal promises and commit ourselves once again to the Christian life.

**CURSILLO DE CHRISTIANDAD**: short course in Christianity.

**CURSILLO MOVEMENT**: The Cursillo movement is a movement of the Church that has as its purpose the Christianization of the world through the apostolic action of Christian leaders in all the areas of human activity. The movement's purpose is achieved by means of a certain strategy and method.

**DE COLORES**: *the colors*. A Spanish song used in Cursillo, with many verses.

**ENVIRONMENT**: the sum of the ideas and circumstances brought about by the people around us: people and situations with which we are in contact. Refers to groups of people rather than physical setting.

**FOURTH DAY**: the rest of your life.

**GROUP REUNION**: "reunion" in Spanish means "meeting," so group reunion is simply a meeting of a group, to share the last week's experience of piety, study, and action, to pray together, and to be mutually accountable to one another for carrying out a plan to "make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ." The following are types of group reunions:
1. ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP REUNION: made up of friends who share an environment: a business, a parish, a neighborhood, etc., which is their common field of apostolic action.

2. FLOATING GROUP REUNION: the groups which meet during ultreya, usually made up of different people each time.

3. PERMANENT or FRIENDSHIP GROUP REUNION: made up of those who are friends, regardless of whether they share environments.

METHOD: the method of Cursillo is basically one of perseverance. The method is used in the post-Cursillo phase and is a means for lay apostles to meet, share, and plan their apostolic work together in small groups (group reunion) and larger groups (ultreyas) where Cursillistas meet to give life and impetus to a community endeavor.

PALANCA: literally means a "lever." It is used in Cursillo to mean an outward expression, through prayer or sacrifice, of our Christian love. It is intercession to Christ to open others to his grace in all kinds of circumstances. In the Anglican tradition "special intention" would convey the meaning of the pictorial word palanca.

ROLLO: literally means a "long boring talk." It has been used in Cursillo to refer to the talks given by both the clergy and laity.

STRATEGY: the strategy of Cursillo involves seeking out the key people in the different environments (the pre-Cursillo phase), converting them to a deeper relationship with God by having them accept their role as lay apostles (the three-day weekend), and then linking them together for their mutual support and apostolic effectiveness (the post-Cursillo phase).

ULTREYA: Onward! A medieval Spanish word which is associated with pilgrimages made on foot to the Shrine of St. James at Campostella in Spain. It was a word of encouragement which one group or pilgrim would call out to another. It conveys the meaning of "press on to the end" or "persevere." In Cursillo we use it as the name of the regular meeting of Cursillistas, where the several permanent group reunions come together, as well as those who have not yet found a permanent group. In the primitive original form, the ultreya has a short and simple structure for sharing Christian life, receiving encouragement from hearing the brief witnesses of other Christians to what God has enabled them to do in their ordinary lives to help bring others closer to Jesus, hearing such experiences related to the Gospel, and praying, singing, and making contact with brothers and sisters in Christ. Its purpose is to foster the progressive conversion of each participant, and to strengthen and encourage them for the work of evangelism: bringing the world to our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. A Talk Flow Presentation

No two weekends are the same. But all weekends are united by four basics: First, they are united by the One who sent us there, our Lord Jesus Christ, Second, they are united by the purpose of Cursillo, which is to have people live what is fundamental for being a Christian. Third, the weekends are united by the team's self-giving participation. Fourth, the weekends are united by the method of the weekend:

- the tender loving care in Christian community provided by the kitchen c
- the teaching and witness provided by the speaking team

Each day of the three-day weekend is a unit, and each tries to do a different thing. The
first day tells the participants what to be, the second tells them how to do, and the third tells them what they must have.

First Evening
Although we think of a weekend as being three days, the events of the first evening are equally important. The meditations given on that evening are intended to establish an atmosphere for spiritual retreat. The evening stresses the need for self-examination and response, the need for openness and reserved judgment, the need for quietness and a concern for God and for each other. From this point, the candidate is face to face with the love of God and the need to respond to that love.

First Day
The five talks of the first day proclaim the ideal of the Christian person living the life of grace. The first presentation, "Ideal," asks the question, What is it to be a person? The answer: We are creatures who live by ideals that direct our lives. Most participants respond by repeating to themselves, "My ideal is to be a Christian." They are doing this while the speaker is asking them to consider what they actually do with their time, thoughts, money, and anything else that might indicate their real commitments. The first speaker could be seen as preparing the soil for seed.

The second talk is a call to the Christian ideal - life in grace. Grace is the Father's favorable attitude toward us, His self-giving. The talk "Grace" presents the life of grace as a gift. Images that describe the life of grace may include the generous, forgiving father (or husband, Hosea) who welcomes his prodigal son (wandering wife) home. Everything else in the weekend is based on the concept of the life of grace.

The connection between the life of grace and the world is the Church. Another way to say Church is "Laity" or "The People of God," which is the third talk. The Church is the community of those who live in grace, and the Church is the channel for that grace to the rest of the world. The world can be saved by bringing it to live the life of grace.

So far the candidates have heard that they are called to be saints, a people living in grace, and that they are called to meet the problems of the world through active participation within the Body of Christ, the Church, the People of God.

Most participants now feel less apprehensive. They may even accept, ever so slightly, that God thinks they are lovable. They all have been challenged.

The fourth talk outlines a simple theme: God is always ready to help those who need Him, and everyone needs His help. The talk "Faith" says that being a Christian is possible because God always helps when help is needed. It is at the end of this talk that the palanca letters are distributed. They are evidence of help from an army of people, many of whom we hardly know.

The last talk on Friday sums up what has been said so far and presents the first of three steps toward the ideal. The first step is based on God's wanting us to direct our entire life toward Him. There are many ways to avoid such intimacy, just as we avoid intimacy with each other. This last talk of the day, "Piety," points out some of the ways we avoid full dedication to God. It suggests that what is necessary is a life of prayer in which we not only talk to Him but also listen to Him.
Second Day

The first day has left the candidate with the question, How do I live this life of grace? The second day is dedicated to showing how. The message is that the participant is to be a leader through prayer, study, and action. The first talk of the second day is "Study" and its message is, "You have to use your head." The Christian life is a special kind of life, and consequently it is necessary to study how to live it.

God wants intimacy. There was no better way to express that than for Him to live as we live. There is no better way for us to respond than to get to know His Son.

It is in the talk "Sacraments" that this personal relationship is stressed and it is at Eucharist itself where we pray "that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us."

The third talk is "Action." It is a practical talk like the study talk, but instead of using the head, the message is "You have to use your voice, your ears, your hands, your feet."

Apostolic action is based on personal contact, which is necessary so that others can meet Christ in you. Why? So that they too might function as leaders in forming a Christian life.

The fourth talk on Saturday brings us back to obstacles to grace. "Obstacles to a Life of Grace" is principally an explanation of how to resist those things that can draw us away from our Christian ideal.

"Leaders" is the last talk of the second day, and, like the last one of the first day, summarizes the talks of the day. This is not a verbal rehash. Rather, the talk portrays someone who has done the things talked about. Who are these saints or saints-to-be who take their Christian vocation seriously? The talk should not paint a picture of an easy task. It's hard work.

Third Day

What is presented in the first two days is nothing that is unique to the weekend. The third day presents a few simple ideas that make this weekend different from any other weekend retreat, seminar, or conference. The third day presents the plans which spread Christian life into the environment.

The candidate now understands life in grace more clearly. It is nearly time to return to daily life. It is time to consider each person's responsibilities in that life. A major part of the talk "The Study and Evangelization of Environments," is a consideration of the environment from the point of view of the relation of the people in it to God and to the life of grace. This practical action talk considers situations as well as the people in them. Christianizing an environment is a tall order! Help comes from God.

The purpose of "The Christian Life," the second talk of the third day, is to show how Christian values are put into practice in daily life. This ties together piety, study, and action.

The spiritual advisor may schedule this talk to follow the talk, "Christian Community in Action." In many ways, such a rearrangement is a more logical and fitting lead-in to the talk on Group Reunion, and affords the spiritual advisor a better opportunity to draw together the various points raised during the weekend. The basic message is:

The secret to success is intimacy with Christ.

The third and key talk on Sunday is "Christian Community in Action." Stress is put on the problem of remaking the world. That can best be done through the building of
Christian community at the family and parish level.
"Group Reunion or Total Security" portrays a person who is persevering in the Christian life, not only through intimacy with God, but through contact with others in group reunion.
"Ultreya (Fourth Day)" also inspires the participants to persevere, explaining ultreya and portraying someone who has used spiritual direction, group reunion and ultreya and seen results.

4. Permanent Group Reunion

Group reunion means, simply, "group meeting". The word for "meeting" in Spanish is "reunion". You may already be "doing" group reunion, or have the basis for a group reunion, without being aware of it or applying that name to it.

Do you meet regularly with a friend or a small group of friends at home, at work, or at church to pray, read, Scripture, and talk about how your life in Christ is going? Do you ask these people for prayer and support when you feel that God is leading you into new or especially difficult situations in carrying out His work? If you have a support group like this, then you are involved already in what could easily become a group reunion.

What's different about group reunion? It has some special ideals and methods.

- the group meets weekly
- the members consider it a primary commitment
- they use the Group Reunion Service Card format of Prayer to the Holy Spirit, and round-the-group sharing: first, the past week's experience in piety, then the moment each one felt most aware of Christ, then study, and finally, action
- the members tell how they are planning apostolic action: some word or deed or personal change which will help bring a person or group of people closer to Christ, at home, school, work, recreation, parish, or other environment.
- they report to one another the results of the last week's plan, and hold one another accountable for planning and carrying out apostolic action in the coming week.
- they pray daily for one another and for their common environment
- they may have some other activities in common

As with Ultreya, it is not necessary for people to make a three-day weekend in order to be in a group reunion. Three-day weekends were invented and are held so that there will be people to become part of group reunions. Anyone who is willing to use the ideals of personal sharing and mutual accountability as means to becoming a better witness for Christ should be welcome to participate in group reunion.

How permanent is "permanent" group reunion?
A group may go on for years, growing in friendship and sharing the friendship of Jesus with one another and with people in their various environments.

Other groups may meet for shorter periods of time. Perhaps members may move away, or after trying out the group method for a time, it seems that particular combination of people does not have the common ground of experience and natural affinity which they thought they had to begin with. Sometimes it seems that a particular group is right for a certain period of time and then it becomes time for its members to seek new associations.
for group reunion. THIS IS NOT FAILURE: it is only change, which is a part of life. It is important to be faithful in friendship in group reunion, and to begin "doing" group reunion as if it were to be forever, but only God knows what is the right life-span for each "permanent" group reunion.

If you are not a part of a group now, here are some things to think about. Are there two or three people in your parish, neighborhood, or place of work whose company you enjoy? Do you think that they might like to share the experience of Christian life with you? Perhaps you have been in a "floating group reunion at an ultreya with someone you'd like to know better as a brother or sister in Christ. Pray about it: read your Group Reunion Service Card over to be sure you know what's involved in grouping: let God lead you to invite others to join in this venture in Christian encouragement.

NOTE: If there are two to five people in a group reunion, and if all share briefly in each category, it should take no more than thirty to forty-five minutes (or a lunch hour) to complete grouping. Of course, groups may wish to spend more time together: the point is that, though group reunion is an essential and valuable part of the Cursillo method, it need not be an overwhelming time commitment. Those who have invested themselves generously in group reunion can testify that God has honored their commitment by increasing faith hope and love amongst the members, and by sending them into their daily lives with renewed courage and desire to bring the world to Jesus Christ.

Finally, as is true of ultreya and of the three-day weekend, group reunion is not intended to be Cursillo-oriented or problem-centered (it is not a discussion group or therapy), but centered on Christ. The test of a group reunion's success is the same as the test of a local Cursillo community: are the environments being Christianized?

5. About the Ultreya

Note: Starting times may vary from place to place: an arbitrary time of 8:00 p.m. is used for this model. In some localities, Leaders' School may be scheduled to meet before the ultreya. This would then incorporate the leaders' group reunion.

Before the ultreya: at about 7:15 p.m. the leaders arrive, conduct a brief leaders' group reunion, and arrange the room with four chairs to a group

Ultreya Outline (Primitive or Basic Form)

8:00 Opening prayer by the leader for the evening.
If there are newcomers, introductions all around.
Group reunions begin. The ultreya leaders help form groups of three or four people who do not normally meet. The leaders scatter into different groups to help those less familiar with the grouping process. The primary purpose of grouping at the ultreya is to share. Of course the level of sharing will not be as deep as in a permanent group reunion, but there are enough categories and questions on the service card to give scope for a meaningful exchange. During the group reunions, the spiritual, director for the evening is available in a separate room for counsel.

8:25 Leader warns that five minutes remain to complete sharing.

8:30 Leader introduces the lay witness speaker, briefly and simply. The topic: "How I am transforming my environment for Christ." This deals with recent experience of planned action, and is not to be Cursillo-oriented, but Christ-centered. See
Guidelines for Ultreya Speakers for further details.

8:40  Leader invites responses or echoes to the witness talk. Two people may be asked in advance to be ready to respond. The purpose of these responses is to confirm or to affirm the speaker's presentation by brief comments on the experience he or she has shared, but from a different environmental perspective.

8:50  Leader introduces spiritual advisor for Biblical reflections or Gospel summary on the witness talk and responses, tying them together with some incident or teaching from Jesus' life. This is not to be a prepared talk. See Guidelines for Ultreya Speakers for further details.

9:00  Leaders asks for, or makes, brief announcements related to Cursillo. Closing prayer, begun by leader, shared by all, and concluded by the spiritual director.

"Ultreya" was originally a cry or shout of encouragement to those on a pilgrimage. For us today, it is a word of encouragement to make what we have learned in the short course in Christianity called Cursillo a continuing force in our lives. The ultreya should be like a strong current of faith, hope and love into which each person plunges, to be carried along with all our brothers and sisters toward greater service to one another and to God. The Fourth Day is not intended to duplicate the experience of the weekend, but to continue it.

Guidelines for Ultreya Speakers

THE LAY WITNESS TALK - ten minutes long – It is:
1. A personal story, told simply and briefly
2. About Jesus Christ. The aim of the witness talk is not to tell people what they should do, but rather to tell about a specific way in which you have tried to bring those He loves closer to Him. It is about how you live with Jesus at the center of your life, and how your love for Him draws you to act and speak for Him.
3. About a recent living experience. Tell how, through prayer and study, you made a plan to bring someone closer to Jesus, in the normal flow of your own life. Make just one or two points and build your talk around them.
4. Concrete and practical: Make your talk vivid by describing who, how, why, what and when, as you tell about carrying out this action which you planned to bring one of your environments closer to Christ. Tell what happened as a result, whether it seemed like a success or a failure.
   You may want to center the talk around a Bible verse or passage; this will show that you take God's Word seriously.

If you can answer "yes" to the following four questions, your talk will fulfill the requirements of an ultreya lay witness talk.
1. Does this talk show that Jesus Christ is in my life?
2. Will it show how much I want to follow Him?
3. Does Jesus Himself hold the most important place in the talk?
4. Will this experience I am sharing stimulate people to think of things which they might plan to do to transform their home, work, parish, recreation or other environment for Christ?

This is what the talk should NOT be:
■ sensational: a big, flashy production number
■ a sermon, instruction in Christianity, or a Bible teaching
■ too emotional - emotions will be affected by a simple, sincere talk about Cursillo
■ a testimonial: not about what Jesus has done for you (which is another kind of witness talk) but about something you have tried to do for Him.
■ over ten minutes long

A few days before the ultreya, talk over with the spiritual director for the ultreya what you are going to say, to help his or her preparation.

ECHO OR RESPONSE SPEAKERS
Two people may be asked in advance to respond. It is best if these people are from different professions and life situations than the speaker, so that they can show that they share in their own different experience the same principles of living with Christ and of being witnesses for Him in their environments. They may confirm the speaker's message: "Yes, I've done something like that, too: it works," or affirm it: "I know that has been effective for others," or "I'm going to try that in my situation," or "I recognize that as a good principle of Christian action."

GOSPEL SUMMARY or SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION (spiritual advisor) - ten minutes
Because there is no experience which cannot be related to Scripture, one of your functions is to pull everything together and link it to the Gospel. You are asked not to prepare a formal written talk. To help in your preparation, the lay witness speaker has been requested to talk with you in advance about what he or she will be sharing, together with any Scripture to be used. After (listening to the witness talk and the responses, your task is to draw on your background in the Scripture and relate the talk and responses to some part of the Gospels. Like the witness talk, this Gospel summary should be simple, brief, and informal. This is the important teaching phase of the ultreya and is the means by which the listeners grow spiritually in their attempt to interpret the Gospel in relationship to their daily living.
You are asked to come to the ultreya slightly before the starting time and be available for spiritual direction and counsel during the group reunion time. The leader will make this known as he or she opens the ultreya.
You may also be asked to conclude the prayers at the close of the ultreya. This is also spontaneous, and can be a very effective teaching function in developing the prayer lives of those who attend.

NOTE: If there is no ordained person available to relate what has been shared to the Gospels, it is appropriate for one of the ultreya leaders who is thoroughly familiar with Scripture to carry out this function. Many lay people have not only read the Bible for years with care and prayer, but have also had formal training in Scripture.