#11: The Study and Evangelization of Environments
(Preferably 15 to 20 minutes maximum)
PURPOSE:
As it states in the *Fundamental Ideas of Cursillo*, “This is the practical application of the talk on Leaders; we are now getting down to specifics.” Candidates are encouraged to look at the environments they left, consider their situations, and determine how to rebuild them on a Christian foundation. The talk should answer the question, “How do I transform my environment for Christ?”

CORE IDEAS:
- We live in several different types of environments: family, work, parish, recreation, social. The persons we interact with in those environments may need to encounter Christ as we have.
- Evangelization is a part of our baptismal covenant,
  1. proclaiming by word and example the good news of God in Christ,
  2. seeking and serving Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves, and
  3. striving for justice and peace and respecting the dignity of every human being. (BCP, p. 305)

Thus, evangelization is a basic expectation of our faith journeys.
- Evangelization of our environments does not happen by accident, it must be planned.

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

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

IN OURSELVES:
“And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.” (2 Cor. 3:18)
1. In our prayer, we draw on God’s power and guidance. (Luke 11:9-10)
2. In our minds, we grow to understand how to transform our environment. (Rom. 12:2)
3. In our hearts;
   a. we seek to be more loving in every situation
   b. we reflect the kind of love that draws us to Christ.
   c. we build bonds of friendship and interest with others, which will inevitably lead to sharing our love for Christ.
4. In our will, we decide and are determined to accomplish something. (Heb. 12:1)
[This is a good spot to mention that they will be hearing about a method for ongoing
growth in Christ called Group Reunion and Ultreya later today.]

IN OTHERS:
We observe how others in our environment relate to the Christian ideal. We are likely to
observe several different types of relationships to Christ. (Specific examples are
recommended here. Care should be taken to be non-judgmental in these descriptions.)
1. Those who are committed to their Christian walk,
   a. who daily strive to live a life of Grace, and
   b. who are working on transforming their own life, but may not be committed to
      transforming the world around them. (their environment).
2. Those who try to be Christian some of the time - they believe and practice their faith
   under certain conditions,
   a. when they are with other Christians and it is comfortable, or
   b. when they are afraid or in danger (God as my “emergency kit” or “spare tire”), or
   c. when things appear to be hopeless (God as a last resort), or
   d. when it is helpful for their reputation (using God for “name dropping”), or
   e. when they are making a deal under duress (“fox-hole God”)

Those who are Christians by affiliation, they have always been Christian, but never
thought much about their faith or why they believe. Their God may be one constructed
from childhood impressions and experiences with parents (good and/or bad). They live
on the fringe of the Church or may be Christian in name only.
4. Those who are not Christians, they do not know God, and they live their lives without
   any reference to God. Some may sense an emptiness in their lives, but no one they trust
   has ever taken the time to witness to them of God’s love for us all.
5. Those who have consciously rejected Christianity,
   a. as a matter of conviction (atheists or non-Christians), or
   b. as a result of tragedy or disillusionment.
6. Those who reject Christianity as a result of apathy and indifference.

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

WHAT TO DO:
1. Win their hearts, so they will be open to receiving Christ. Be loving, patient and
   understanding. (Heb. 12:14-15)
2. Win their minds. Help them to understand who Christ is and what it is to live the
   Christian life. Know and believe that every person has a hunger for God. As one of the
   saints has said, “We live with a God-shaped vacuum in our souls.”
3. Win their will. Communicate the Christian ideal of Grace; present the call to follow Christ. If a person is drawn to the Christian life, he or she will see it as attractive and compelling. Their hearts are being prepared by the Holy Spirit. We will trust God to guide us about when to extend an invitation to follow Christ.

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

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

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

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

Suggested Readings:
Book of Common Prayer, Baptismal Covenant, p. 304-305; Catechism, p. 858-859
Becoming a Contagious Christian, Bill Hybels & Mark Mittleberg
The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement, 3rd edition, 2003, National Cursillo Center, Dallas, TX.