

Good evening fellow Cursillistas. This evening we'll be focusing on one of the Sunday clergy talks, Life In Grace, which is the final Grace talk of the weekend. Yes, this talk is given by one of the ordained clergy, which I am not!! But the purpose of this talk tonight is to hopefully become better informed on how the team table leaders should lead the discussion following this talk. Let's start with a little background information.

As you know, the first day of a Cursillo Weekend for the candidates focuses on an encounter with self. Day two, concentrates on the encounter with Jesus Christ as both our Brother and Friend. Sunday, the third day of the weekend focuses on the encounter with other people. After the candidates have meditated on the person of Jesus, now they should be ready to share Christ with others. Jesus not only grants His friendship ...thru Sanctifying Grace...but he places in the candidates' hands the treasure of His redeeming blood, so that he may make it bear abundant fruit in others. **We must go forth and bear true fruit; our Apostolic Action will be the fruit that Christ expects of us.**

Sunday, the third day is a call to the Apostolate. No sound and productive Apostolate can be achieved without inner life, without a true and growing relationship with Jesus Christ, nor without Grace. The third day should be an explanation of what is involved in being a Christian leader, an apostle of Christ, a person who lives the life of Grace fully and without reservation in the modern world. It does not focus on the individual as much as on the individual's presence in the world and their relations with other Christians. It gives life to the vision of how the Church and, therefore, how the individual apostle, can function in the "everyday settings" of our modern world.

The third day also provides a vision. This vision is that of Christianity in Action that is active, full of hope, and striving to accomplish something. It is also the vision of authentic Christians, apostles in their own environments, who are really making a difference according to their own possibilities.

After listening to the Life In Grace talk, it should be clearly obvious to everyone in the room that living the life of Grace requires nourishment. This is where the "green card" is introduced as the lever that spoon-feeds this nourishment. Vital to the success of the Cursillista's fourth day is the understanding that the green card is a blueprint for spiritual growth, both individually and within Christian community. It also is very important in helping the Cursillista feel more confident in their apostolic and evangelization pursuits.

As table leaders, we must be vigilant in not only realizing, but also clearly explaining that it is not necessary to follow each and every suggestion listed on the green card. To a new Cursillista, that could be very threatening and extremely overwhelming. We don't want to scare them away from having the confidence and willingness to reach out to other Christians. That could lead to an Apostolic failure. Remember, small incremental steps usually work best, especially when just starting out on this new venture. I am quite certain that Jesus will be very satisfied if our journey with him and our efforts to further His Kingdom progress... one step at a time, one prayer at a time, one heart at a time, one person at a time.

The **Life In Grace** talk, together with the other Sunday talks, is directing the candidates to life back home. It seeks to deal with the question: "How can I keep alive and vibrant this joy and enthusiasm of living in Christ?" Please allow me to divert just a bit here to share with you an explanation of "joy" that just might be a little different from what we usually associate the word joy with. Consider this for a moment: "**Joy is the echo of God in our hearts**"!! When we experience the unconditional love of Jesus Christ in our hearts, are you not inspired to share and reflect that same love with others? That is the echo I am referring to. This is pure JOY.

This talk is meant to help the candidates for the "long haul" of the Christian walk. This sharing should be as practical as possible, but also inspirational too. A strong emphasis is placed on Piety – Spiritual Aids – as a way of tying in disciplines that have already been practiced throughout the weekend itself. Living boldly and positively with Christ and other Christians is a challenge. We need continual nourishment of Grace to maintain a strong foundation in order to successfully take on this challenge.

All during these three days, the candidates have been taking a Grace walk with each other and with the team. They have seen first-hand that God is a God of Grace and loves us – no matter what. They have found that God makes this grace both concrete and incarnational. (one with God) Yes this talk is entitled "The Christian Life of Grace", but some like to refer to it as: "**How to keep on keeping on.**"

Many, hopefully all the candidates will have felt the Holy Spirit tugging on them deeply throughout the weekend. The Word of God, the wonderful Communion services, the prayers of people all over the world, love everywhere we turn – all this and more makes the entire experience quite intense. So now what? Is it all downhill from here?

We mentioned a bit earlier the "green card, or appropriately referred to as the *service card*". Imagine for a moment if we called it the "**tool card**". Yes, the tools for staying continually nourished by God's grace, through prayer, and with the ongoing support of a loving Christian community. The "rhythm" of the Christian life revolves around three elements: Piety, Study,

and Action. The spiritual “aids” listed under the Piety portion of this tool card deepen our daily walk with Christ.

As table leaders facilitating the discussion after this “Christian Life In Grace” talk, go over the “tool card”, the “green card”, the “service card”, however you refer to it, but please emphasize among your table family members that this card is **“a guide for staying alive in their faith”!!**

When you talk about the list of spiritual “aids” to deepen our walk with Christ – our Piety, try to help the candidates see worship and communion in this light....(1) don’t just attend church, but **GO TO WORSHIP**, and (2) receive this incredible meal as often as you can.

Other spiritual aids are Morning Offering/Evening Thanks...(1) begin each day by offering it to God (as has been done each day during the Cursillo Weekend). Invite the Lord to be present in your relationships and situations, ask him for Grace to guide you throughout each day and (2) end the day with a short word of thanks.

Part of my daily morning offering is to ask God for the grace to first, be aware of the opportunities he will give me to serve Him during the day. And secondly, I ask for the grace to serve Him faithfully, and if it’s His will, successfully. Recall one of Mother Teresa’s messages: **“We are not called to be successful, only faithful.”**

When you talk about Devotions/Meditation/Prayer – there is nothing like a warm and personal time with God each day...read a bit of Scripture and /or from a devotional book. Also, rote or form prayer is OK, but also be willing to be spontaneous – pray about what occupies your mind and heart. **Remember, you are communicating with your best friend!!**

Finally, make time to truly and deeply consider your moment(s) closest to Christ: When were you most aware of Christ presence over the course of a day or during the week? Why did you feel this closeness?

Our Study helps us to both know the person of Jesus better and also to understand the gifts God has entrusted to us. Here is a question to seriously ponder....How well do I truly know Jesus? If He is my best friend...and I hope that He is....how much time do I spend getting to know Him better? This is a non-threatening way to encourage the candidates to devote time to Christian study.

And of course, our Action, our Apostolic Action, provides us with opportunities to share this new found “Life of Christian Grace” with the people that we most closely associate with, our family members, our co-workers, the people we socialize with and the people we pray with. But we must be certain that we enlist God’s grace for this journey.

Finally, encourage the candidates to allow their own hearts to “**Take on the heart of a servant.**” Assure them that the best is yet to come. The experience of thousands before them testifies that the weekend is only the beginning. They have the opportunity of a lifetime to continue to grow in faith, in love, and in truth. As they grow, their faith will deepen. Life can be lived in Grace – the Grace of God through Jesus Christ.

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