



Living and Sharing the Methodology of Cursillo

Presented by Scott Ready, Region 6 Coordinator, at the 36th National Cursillo Encounter held at Wheaton College in the Diocese of Joliet, July 23-26, 2026.

Good Morning – my name is Scott Ready. I am from the Diocese of Kansas City – St Joseph. I attend Good Shepherd Parish in Smithville, MO (a small town just north of KC). I began my Cursillo #256 in 2015. I sat at the great St. Paul's table.

Introduction

My Rollo this morning is on Living and Sharing the Method of Cursillo. As most of you know, the Cursillo Movement has a 'specific method' that is tied to a specific purpose. That purpose is to communicate God's love to people. The method is through Friendship –

Make a friend
Be a friend
Bring a friend to Christ

The Method of Cursillo is divided into 3 phases:

*Precursillo,
Cursillo
and Postcursillo*

Some refer to this as a ring of Unity or a perfect Unity. Each phase generates the next. Precursillo generates the Cursillo Weekend, the Cursillo Weekend generates the Postcursillo, and, in turn, the Postcursillo generates the Precursillo.

The Method of Cursillo includes:

- A specific way to discern the person in need of evangelization and the preparation of these people through friendship (Precursillo),
- An effective means to motivate the person so they decide to live what is fundamental to being Christian (Cursillo Weekend),
- A normal way of living the faith in communion with others by sharing the Gospel message that God loves us! (Postcursillo).

Cursillo seeks to bring the Good News - **that God loves us**, to as many people as possible. It is the invitation of Philip's proposal to Nathanael to "*come and see*" (Jn. 1:46).

Essential Characteristics of the Method

The Method of Cursillo follows a Kerygmatic approach – a proclamation. The kerygma of the Church is the proclamation of God's love manifested in Jesus Christ. The essential Characteristics of the Method are these:

- It is Christ-centered - He is the core of its message.
- It is joyful Good News
- It is made by witnesses who have encountered Christ.

- It leads to conversion, a desire for change, a new orientation that gives meaning to our lives.

I just got back from a Steubenville weekend. Has anyone even been to a Steubenville conference? It is amazing, and it is such a gift to young people. Over four thousand high schoolers gathered in Springfield, MO, and the number one message was that God loves them, God wants them to be holy, and He will always be there for them. Many young people (and of course older people) think that they are unworthy of this love, but God tells them and us that we are all worthy!!

The Basic Elements of the Method – Prayer (Palanca), Witness, Friendship

Palanca – Prayer, sacrifice, and works of mercy are characteristic elements of the Method of Cursillo.

Witness – In Cursillo, as in any evangelizing activity, the way of communicating the message is through a personal witness of life. In the three phases of the Method, the witness of life is the essential first step for effectively evangelizing the person.

Friendship – Make friends to make them friends of Christ. Friendship is a basic virtue for the accompanying process that develops the Precursillo, Cursillo, and Postcursillo.

St. Frances de Sales says this about friendship: “If the bond of your communion is love, devotion, and Christian perfection, friendship will be precious indeed because:

- 1) It has its origins in God
- 2) It is maintained in God
- 3) It will endure forever in God.”

Sirach has some great words about friendship – chapter 6 vs 14-16. Let me read:

A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter. He who finds one, finds treasure.

A faithful friend is beyond price. No scales can measure his excellence.

A faithful friend is a life-saving remedy, and those who fear the Lord will find Him.

Life-saving Remedy!!

1st Phase of the Method – The Precursillo

Evangelization - The Christian message, which is communicated through friendship and witness, is aimed preferably to those who are far away [distant] from Christ, his Church, and Christian virtues, either because no one has informed them, or they have been misinformed or don't want to be informed.

The purpose of Precursillo is the same as it is for the other two phases:

- That the good news that God loves us is heard by as many people as possible.
- That no person lives without knowing that God loves them.
- To create friendship with oneself, with God, and with others.
- To become friends with others to make them friends of Christ.

The Charism of Cursillo is not used to target a specific type of person or group. Cursillo strives for diversity. But - if the opportunity presents itself, we should aim to bring a person who is “faraway” (distant) from Christ, his Church, and Christian virtue. We are looking for someone with personality (character), who is Open, Humble, and Capable of wonder.

Timing Matters! The goal for attending a Cursillo is for those who can go WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, convenient, and with proper disposition, so they can experience the triple encounter with self, with Christ, and with others. I have seen candidates come through a weekend who were not ready; it was too soon after a major life event, some had too much emotional baggage, they were not.... Open, Humble, and Capable of wonder – and so, they did not receive the full fruit of the Cursillo.

2nd Phase of the Method – The Cursillo Weekend

The Cursillo Weekend is lived as a personal experience. At the same time, Cursillo is an experience of shared life because the person is linked to others, and finally, the Cursillo is lived in total freedom without impositions.

The Cursillo is not the most important part of the method.

The most important thing is that there are people who live and share the essentials of Christianity in their daily lives; people who, as we say, live in a climate of Group Reunion and are connected with a living Christianity at the Ultreya.

We do not hold Group Reunions and Ultreyas so that the Cursillo Weekend becomes possible. As the founder says, we hold the Cursillo so that people can get to a Group (and Ultreya).

The Cursillo, above all, is the living and sharing of what is fundamental to being Christian through the method of friendship. It is the discovery of the invitation made to each candidate to *come and see*. It is an invitation to experience the reality of the triple encounter with self, with Christ, and with others.

The Technique of the Cursillo Weekend

The technique for the Cursillo Weekend is the application of psychology and theology in an orderly manner. The weekend – first and foremost – is powered by God’s Grace.

The purpose is to facilitate that three-fold encounter:

- With Self
- With Christ
- With Others

The climate of the Cursillo is progressive. It moves from the fearful curiosity of the first day to the friendship and apostolic joy of the third day. The climate of the third day should be the same as that of the Ultreya, and the climate of the Ultreya should be the same as the Cursillo.

The Message of the Cursillo Weekend

What is offered is not a talk, a lecture, or a presentation... but a rollo, *a vital sharing of life lived and experienced*. The rollista must be living the truths that are spoken about.

The **Spiritual Rollos** present the theology of living the life of Grace. (Structure of Ideas Book)

The **Meditations** are a channel toward the Cursillistas' mental prayer. (Structure of Ideas Book)

The **Lay Rollos** present a witness to the actual living of a life of Grace. (Structure of Ideas Book)

What is intended during the Cursillo Weekend is the conversion of the person, which in turn will motivate the conversion of his social circle or environment. The conversion will happen through

- the grace of God,
- the free will of the person
- the proclamation of the message made by witnesses (team) who are living what they are saying.

3rd Phase of the Method – The Postcursillo

Postcursillo is designed to sustain an ongoing conversion so the person can live Christianity in everyday life. The focus is centered on sharing God's love with others and transforming the world from within.

In the last rollo of the Cursillo, a *Total Security* of friendship is offered. **We can live a life of grace**, and we do it through **Group Reunion** and **Ultreya**.

The Group Reunion

The Group Reunion (group of friends) is kind of like the central nervous system or 'cornerstone' of the Cursillo Movement.

Christ assures us: "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*" (Mathew 18:20)

The Group Reunion is for sharing what is lived from the love of God and the love of neighbor. (Mathew 22:37-39, The Great Commandment)

It is a structured sharing of ones:

Faith (piety)

Growth (study)

Apostolic Life (action)

If we can't get someone into a group right away, it will be very hard for that person to live the life of grace that we told them was possible on the weekend.

The Ultreya

Ultreya was the greeting which pilgrims used to encourage one another on the way to Santiago de Compostela (St. James of Compostela). It was used as a term of encouragement and a promise to meet again.

In Cursillista terms, it offers an invitation to go beyond oneself to meet others and build friendships; it is a call to keep going with our heads held high; it is a call to not give up, no matter what the difficulties, and to spread the joy of Christ to others.

Ultreya! Come on, it's not far now! This is the message we share when we meet at Ultreya:

- To encourage each other in faith,
- To share lives in friendship,
- To live out Christianity in action through a reunion of friends,
- To support each other in following the path of everyday life (i.e., normality)

The Ultreya is the *reunion of the groups* – the coming together of Christians to share and mutually strengthen, in their lives, the living of what is fundamental to being Christian.

The Three Essential Stages of the Ultreya:

1st Stage: The Arrival and Floating Group Reunion

People arriving at the Ultreya naturally form small groups of 3-6 people. Men group with men, women with women. Cursillistas should deliberately seek to group with different people during each Ultreya. This is what I like to call the Grouping of the Groups. I love this part because it has inspired me so many times!

The Floating Group Reunion meets for 30 Minutes.

- Invocation to the Holy Spirit.
- Sharing of Piety, Study, and Action. (not as in-depth as Group Reunion)
- Closest moment to Christ.
- Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Our Father.

2nd Stage: Life Witness Rollo (Experiential)

Once the floating groups are finished, everyone assembles in the place where the witness rollo will be shared.

The Rollista will witness how he **is striving to live the Christian life and/or how sad he is about not living it.** (10 – 15 minutes) The rollista does not have to be a polished speaker. What's important is that he is striving to be holy or desires to be, or that it hurts him not to be holy.

- Two or three people provide an echo (resonate) to what is said. (2 to 3 minutes each)
- Spiritual Summation - The Spiritual Advisor summarizes the witness talk and the echoes and ties them to the Gospel. The Spiritual summation is not done when a clergy member is not present. The summation should encourage the Cursillistas to go forth and live the Good News. (5 min)
- Announcements – The Ultreya Coordinator makes announcements that pertain to the Cursillo Movement. This is the time to announce the dates for the next Cursillos, Regional and National Encounters, workshops, picnics, etc.

3rd Stage: Chapel – Visit to the Blessed Sacrament

If a Tabernacle is available, the Cursillistas make a “farewell visit” before the Tabernacle to encounter Christ. Exposing the Blessed Sacrament is not necessary. The visit is directed by the

Ultreya Coordinator, who centers on what was heard during the Ultreya and conveys prayer petitions for specific intentions that attendees have requested. The Ultreya ends by singing De Colores.

Core Themes for Ultreya

Friendship is the method

Witness is the message

Means to sustain conversion

The Goal: **living Christianity daily**

The Founder's Thoughts About the Ultreya

“The Ultreya is the place where the supernatural is lived out with absolute normality. That is where one goes to be and feel more Christian. It is the place where we learn consciously, simply, joyfully, pleasantly, and contagiously from others how to live in a Christian way, because it enables communication and the possibility to encounter Christ in our brothers and sisters. We can appreciate what Christ values in each one of us.

Final Thoughts

Cursillo is not just an event – it's a way of life. Where would we all be if it were not for the Cursillo?

My story:

Nothing after Confirmation – no youth group

Young Life

Prayer – talking to God

Scripture - The Bible – old white one, dusted

Fellowship – can't live this Christian life alone

Never lost my Catholic identity, but I never embraced it as I should have.

Sunday Mass, limited prayers, etc.

Cursillo 11 years ago – spent 3 days with catholic men, sharing our faith experiences and re-learning the faith. Changed my life – I group with some awesome men every Thursday; I go to most of our city's Ultreyas. I get to attend Mass every day; I go to Reconciliation twice a month; I am faithful to regular prayer throughout the day; I read scripture each day with a new attitude around what it is teaching me; I live life knowing that God loves me, and I try to share that with others in my environments.

The method leads people to:

Know they are loved by God.

Live that love.

& Share it with others.

Ultreya!! Keep moving forward in faith with a company of friends!!