Generosity in Friendships

At the Ultreya Rep/Parish Ambassador in-service meeting a few weeks ago a question was asked, “how do you make friends?” At the time, I responded with “just begin with a smile”, but I sensed the gentleman wanted more concrete steps to friendship. It definitely got us thinking. How do you make a new friend? How does a friendship grow? How do you keep a friend? When is the right time to introduce Jesus to your friend? Simple, yet complex, questions.

The answers are also simple, yet complex. Think about your small friendship group. What are the qualities of relationship that maintain your group? In our groups we find first our common denominator is a love of Jesus. And sharing how He works in our lives sustains us, gives us hope and courage to live through the challenges and joys of daily life. Friendship with Cursillo friends is different than with others. Do you remember how you became friends with your sponsor before your Cursillo weekend?

As far as we can tell, there are no concrete steps to take, no recipe to follow. But there are some qualities that people seeking to make friends live out, sometimes just naturally, sometimes with specific intentions. Making a new friend who is not yet a Cursillista requires you to find some common interests and ways to share time together. Literally, it does begin with a smile followed by a friendly greeting. What follows depends on the people involved and how much time and energy they can invest in creating a relationship. The key here is the investment in time and energy—generosity of spirit, or to look at it another way, sacrifice of self to gain something greater for both.

In our fast-paced world this process takes longer than we would like. But the results are worth it when through mutual respect and trust friends can eventually talk about our Savior without reservation or worry that it is not a politically correct thing to do. Relationship has been established, the bridge to something greater has been built.

In our Cursillo community we understand about generosity of spirit, sacrifice of self, openness to others, true joyfulness that comes from our relationship with Jesus and each other. Opportunities abound to spend friend-time with each other. We have seen generosity play out recently in the way experienced Secretariat members mentor new members, Cursillistas preparing dinner for seminarians, English Cursillistas preparing meals for our Spanish friends’ Cursillo de Cursillo weekend, and the acceptance of our next Rector and Rectora to form teams that will lead candidates into a deeper relationship with Christ.

Our Cursillo movement depends on each of us giving with joy, our time and energy, our generosity and sacrifice, both for needs of the movement and for the sake of bringing new friends to Christ. This mission begins after a weekend and is nurtured in our small groups, but it is designed for us to spread further for the good of all.

God bless you, Friends!
Larry and Jeanne Bendzinski
As we enter the month of May, we look to the rest of the Easter season that will culminate with the Ascension of Jesus into heaven and the sending of the Holy Spirit nine days later on Pentecost Sunday, which we will celebrate on May 15th this year. So, I would like to write about the “Power of the Spirit.”

One of the most pressing concerns to confront the modern person is the quest for meaning in our everyday lives. Psychiatrists and pastoral counselors indicate that a great majority of those who come for help are seeking meaning in their lives. It is never enough for us to just exist. We need more than food, clothing, and shelter. Because we as humans have an intellect and spirit, we need to find some meaning or reason for living. Because we are made in the image and likeness of God, we are restless until we find ultimate meaning in our lives. That is, all of our life is a search for God. Until we rest in God, we will continue to be “on the move” going from distraction to distraction.

Life becomes an endless escape. We can try to escape in our work, we can try to escape in seeking after pleasure, and we can try to escape in seeking material goods and status. However, these escapes are short lived. Eventually we must pay a call on ourselves and see who answers. We must face the kind of person we have become through our free decisions. We must take responsibility for the things and people we have loved and found meaning through them.

The Christian life is just that – a way of life. To be a Christian is a way of living in the world – valuing, judging, and finding meaning. To be a Christian is to live out a whole new structure of existence. The old order has lost its power over us. The Christian is not conformed to the world, but labors, through the Spirit, to renew the face of the earth. The Christian life is one that has found meaning – lasting meaning through living a personal and communal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The restlessness and anxieties of the day are not eliminated. The daily struggles and trials are all too present. The daily failures are real. But through all of this, the presence of Jesus, through the Spirit, sustains and gives us courage. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the fears and anxieties of daily life have lost their ultimate power. This is the truth that sets us free!

Pray often the words, “Come Holy Spirit! Come!”

Fr. Al Backmann
The Gift of Service

Eight of us from the English speaking Cursillo Community had the opportunity to serve our Spanish brothers and sisters at their Cursillo De Cursillo Encounter (CDC) hosted in Shakopee the weekend of Friday, April 1, 2016.

Four different groups representing Minnesota Valley Ultreya served breakfast and lunch to a group of 50 participants. They were so very appreciative, and charming! And we enjoyed watching them enjoying their meals with an added dose of hot sauce!

Mike and I were delighted to meet up with Jeny Correa who was participating in the CDC. She helped us when we had an informational Sunday for the Spanish mass at Church of the Risen Savior. We got a big hug right away and then she introduced us to a familiar face who we recognized from church. Esteban Morales and his wife lived their weekend last year. Jeny asked him about sharing his experience lecturing at the CDC pre-Cursillo (pre-CDC) hosted in Shakopee the weekend of Friday, May 2016

One of the others helping to serve said this, "What a fun and spiritually uplifting time I had helping to serve the Spanish CDC. The team was so wonderful to work and pray with, that kind of felt we had a mini grouping session going on that morning. The CDC participants were so appreciative of our team serving them. For me, their smiles and heartfelt thankyou really gave me a spiritual lift for the rest of my day."

Thank you for the opportunity to serve, Jeanne & Mike Anderson Cursillo Ambassadors for Church of the Risen Savior.

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**Ultreya Dates and Meeting Times in May**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Guardian Angels, Oakdale (Postluck)</td>
<td>6:30 PM</td>
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<td>St Henry, Monticello</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Korean Catholic Church St P</td>
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<tr>
<td>MN Valley</td>
<td>Risen Savior, Burnsville</td>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>contact <a href="mailto:vananh.hoang65@yahoo.com">vananh.hoang65@yahoo.com</a> for more info</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Our Lady of Mt Carmel</td>
<td>All Sundays 9:30AM</td>
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**Ultreya Representatives**

- **Fairmont**: fairmont-ultreya@tc-cursillo.org
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  - Jackie Helmke: 952.334.4368
- **Vietnamese**: vietnamese-ultreya@tc-cursillo.org
  - Van Anh Hoang: 612.384.3268

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Upcoming Cursillo Events

Summer Cursillo Weekends
Our Lady of Grace, Edina
#357 Men July 7-10
Rector Dave Hutton
#358 Women July 14-17
Rectora Mo Kayser

Twin Cities Cursillo
Summer Celebration
Hyland Park in Blomington
Saturday, August 20
Mass, picnic meal & fun
Save the date—more details to come

More details and information are on the website  www.tc-cursillo.org

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SCHOOL OF LEADERS—May 3rd 6:30pm
St. Patrick’s Church, Edina 6820 St. Patrick’s Lane
St Martin’s Hall
Commissioning for new leaders
with Dn. Joe Frederick
reflection on
Jesus and Friendship in the Gospels.
All 4th Day are encouraged to attend for
Development and Growth