

# What is Cursillo

## Cursillo (pronounced KER **SEE** O)

is a three-day learning, sharing, inspirational experience of living in a Christian community. The word "Cursillo" is Spanish, meaning "a short course." Cursillo is an abbreviation of the full title: CURSILLO DE CRISTIANDAD which means "A Short Course in Christian Community Living." During the three days of a Cursillo weekend a person not only hears inspiring talks on what it really means to be a Christian, but actually experiences the joy of building and being part of a genuine Christian community.

## HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Cursillo began when a group of priests and laymen in Majorca, Spain examined the condition of the Church. From 1943 to 1947 they formulated a "method" to help renew the Church. They called it a "short course" or "short experience" in the fundamental teachings of Jesus as lived with other Christians. They also developed an ongoing program so the initial enthusiasm would continue.

Cursillo is approved by the Bishop and was introduced into the Fargo- Moorhead area in the 1960s. The first Cursillo weekend was held in June of 1962. It is one of the tools of the diocesan pastoral plan of renewal. It fits into the Church structure and is one of the many movements of the Church.

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT OF THE THREE DAYS?

Thirty to forty men or women meet from Thursday evening until Sunday evening with a team of priests and laypeople. The "retreat" portion of the Cursillo weekend lasts only from opening night until after breakfast the following morning, during which time silence is to be observed. Thereafter there is informal talk, discussion, singing, joking and laughter, and spontaneous informal prayer.

During the three days, fifteen talks are given: ten by laypeople, five by priests. The talks emphasize the true meaning of grace, the sacraments, the Mass, the nature and need of prayer, living one's daily life in union with God, studying to understand the gift of God, and introducing Christ to others by word and deed. The atmosphere of the three days is one of joy and grace, and it produces wonderful results.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE CURSILLO WEEKEND?

The Cursillo weekend in itself is simply a beginning. When correctly applied and overseen, the method of Cursillo has very positive results in the spiritual re-vitalization of the Christian community. The influence of Christ on the individual is then transferred to his/her family, school, place of business, social circle, etc. The goal of the Cursillo movement is to make Christ the prime influence in one's life and in society.

After the Cursillo weekend, the Cursillista (one who has made a Cursillo) is encouraged to do three things: 1) Expand his/her prayer life through an individual program of daily spiritual exercises; 2) Initiate an ongoing study program; 3) Become a more active apostle with and for Christ.

## GROUP REUNION

A group reunion is an informal weekly gathering of three to six friends who share their enthusiastic faith in Jesus Christ. Each person shares his/her life in areas of prayer, study, and action. By spending time each week in this fashion we lend support to one another and we sustain apostolic enthusiasm for the most central person in our life... Jesus Christ.

## ULTREYA (Pronounced UL **TRAY** AH)

Ultreya is a larger gathering than the group reunion. This is the gathering of all Cursillistas. This weekly hour and a half meeting to share one's life in Christ builds the Christian community on a wider basis.

"WHERE TWO OR THREE MEET TOGETHER IN MY NAME, I SHALL BE THERE WITH THEM."  
(Words of Christ, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 18, Verse 20.)