

TRES DÍAS #1 TEAM MEMBERS

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TRES DÍAS

Notes on  
Method, Structure,  
and Dynamics.

August, 1972

## TRES DÍAS

- o Extends through 72 contiguous hours beginning on Thursday evening.
- o Is held separately for men and women, so that team members and candidates can relate more readily to each other.
- o Is a Pentecostal weekend, but is not necessarily (or even desirably) to lead to baptism of the Holy Spirit in its most visible forms during the weekend.
- o Is a weekend of Christian community living, involving a combination of carefully developed, theologically sound techniques, all of which are meant to lead to a full, personal commitment to Christ.
- o Embodies personal witness, but is not a simple revival meeting.
- o Employs group dynamics, but is not sensitivity training or group therapy.
- o Employs theological instruction, but is not a church school.
- o Includes a period of silent introspection, but is not a simple retreat.
- o Is of evangelical import, but is not meant to convert.
- o Involves a great amount of dedication and careful preparation on the part of the team, but only basic faith and openness on the part of candidates.
- o Is a clear and obvious manifestation of the work of Christ in the world today, and an example of the presence and effect of the Holy Spirit.
- o Is a tool of God, not an end in itself. Tres Días tends to produce a longer-lived effect than a revival meeting, but it will not produce a permanent effect without follow-up activity.
- o Can bring new life into a moribund church.

## O U T L I N E

### Thursday evening:

Reception, registration, initial meeting in rollo room, introduction to each other and to songs, coffee hour, begin spiritual retreat, first chapel visit.

### Friday: What to do.

Morning chapel, end retreat, breakfast, first joke session, begin rollos.

1. Ideal -- what it is to be a man.
2. Habitual Grace -- ideal life in God's grace.
3. Layman in the Church -- Church = connection between life in grace and the real world.
4. Actual Grace -- God is ready at all times to help those in need.
5. Introduction of palanca.
6. Piety -- the key talk of the weekend. Sums up preceding talks, presents the basic step in being an apostle: to live as a Christian.

Poster session, dinner, songs, chapel visit.

### Saturday: How to do it.

Morning chapel, breakfast, joke session.

1. Study -- need to learn how to live in grace.
2. Sacraments -- personal relationship to Christ through sacraments.
3. Action -- what to do in order to be pious. (Apostolic Action)
4. Obstacles to Grace -- what draws Christians away from the ideal.
5. Leaders -- picture of natural result of being a complete Christian.

Poster session and/or skits, songs, dinner, chapel visit.

Agape at close of evening, followed by chapel visit.

### Sunday: Application to life.

Mañanita, morning chapel, breakfast, joke session.

1. The Environment -- life in grace viewed in context of everyday life.
2. Life in Grace -- means of tackling the environment.
3. Christian Community in Action -- fits all preceding talks together.
4. Total Security -- maintaining what was found in Tres Días.
5. The Fourth Day -- perseverance as a Christian.

Final chapel, presentation of cross, farewell (abrazo), closing.

## P R E P A R I N G A R O L L O

1. A good rollo must have real substance, rather than a lot of generalities.
2. Serious study and research should go into the preparation of a talk. Seek information and new ideas from ministers, teachers, laymen, books, essays, magazine articles, etc. Look for sources which are current, and which are saying something related to your talk.
3. You must provoke the candidates to think, and to see things in a new light; aim toward giving them a new perspective on truth.
4. Buddy System: Spend some hours with people who have given the same talk you are giving. Cross-fertilization of ideas often is helpful.
5. Keep the talk within a meaningful spiritual framework.
6. Try not to worry about speaking techniques; the important thing is to let the real you come through. There will almost certainly be a candidate who is a better speaker, one who is better-educated, more talented, etc., than you are, so don't try to impress them with your skill or knowledge or talents. If you speak openly, honestly, and naturally about the subject of your talk, you will be giving of yourself -- and that's what's important!
7. The talk outline gives you the theme of your talk, but you must develop that theme in your own way. Canned talks are about as helpful as a tape recorder.
8. Give personal witness and/or Christian witness to the extent that is proper for your talk, but don't force it. Again, be yourself.
9. Bear in mind that most candidates will already have a high degree of awareness and considerable formal education. Don't ramble, and don't tell them what they already know.
10. Use Bible quotations generously.
11. There is an old axiom which says: Tell them what you are going to tell them, then tell them, and then tell them what you told them. This approach, used with a little bit of sophistication, can be quite effective, **especially** when you are using a key word or phrase which you want to be sure to get across. It also helps you to find several ways to make the same point.
12. Don't throw stones at the organized Church.
13. Don't give the impression that the team members have all the answers and that the candidates are there to get "the message" from us. We must never be viewed as (or worse, view ourselves as) the "frozen chosen", some kind of elitist group.
14. With the exceptions of Piety (40-50 min.) and Sacraments (2 hrs), talks should be about 25 to 30 minutes in length.

## GIVING A ROLLO

### I: THE PURPOSE OF THE TALK

Be prepared by the first team meeting to explain in your own words:

- A. The purpose of the talk and what it is supposed to accomplish.
- B. Your plan for accomplishing this.
- C. Explain how your approach accomplishes this.
- D. What is the central theme of your talk.
- E. What are the concrete major points of your talk. Try to think of your talk as if you were a candidate trying to take notes on it.
- F. What do you really want the candidates to carry away with them from your rollo.
- G. Prepare five discussion questions, or thought-provoking ideas, which the table leaders could use if they have a need to focus a rambling discussion on the main points of your rollo. (note: discussion questions, not answers) When you give your talk at a team meeting, make sure all team members have a chance to write down these questions.
- H. What do you plan to use as a real attention-getting opening and a real attention-focusing closing?
- I. How does your talk fit in with the other talks, and with the talk outlines?

### II: TEAM CRITIQUE OF THE TALK

After presenting the points listed above to your fellow team members, the team will critique your talk. You should then - and only then - flesh out your talk. Go back, rework the outline, and fill it in with the actual content of your final product.

### III: THE FINISHED TALK

Be prepared at subsequent team meetings to give a finalized version of your talk. If more polishing is needed after that, you may want to retry all or part of your talk at another team meeting, if time permits. In any case, don't over-polish. Remember that the important thing in any rollo is not your skill, nor the words you use, but how much you can give of yourself.

## STRUCTURE OF TRES DÍAS

Tres Días (three days) is essentially a non-Catholic version of the Cursillo de Cristiandad (short course in Christianity), which originated in Spain a number of years ago.

The founders of the Cursillo movement saw a world of great need around them. They knew that the answer to the needs of the world had to be Christ and His grace; but when they looked around them they saw Christians who did not live for Christ, and they saw a church that was organized to meet all possible needs, but still ineffective and without life. They developed the Cursillo to meet part of this problem -- to provide any part of the church which was ready to undertake the formation of Christian life with all the men it needed -- men who would have a deep dedication to Christ and to bringing all men to Him -- men who would undertake a regular program of formation in Christianity, and who would make their Christian life conscious and vital -- men who would understand how to be part of a unified apostolic effort.

### The Progression of Talks (Rollos):

Considering the progression of talks in the Tres Días weekend is a way to bring out the structure and purpose of the outline of the weekend. Considering the weekend talk-by-talk pins some of the main ideas to their places in the weekend. It also shows a clearer picture of the actual flow of the weekend. Considering the main ideas topically is an approach to understanding some of the bases of Tres Días, but it tends to obscure the process of developing ideas in the weekend itself.

There are several ways of bringing out the progression of talks, because they are interrelated in several ways. One obvious division is between the minister's talks and the lay talks. The minister's talks present the theology of living the life in grace, and the lay talks teach one how to live the life in grace as a layman.

Another division groups Ideal, Study, and The Environment; Layman in the Church, Action, and Christian Community in Action; and Piety, Leaders, and Total Security. The first three deal with the intellect (understanding what it is to be a Christian), the second three with the will (apostolic action), and the last three with the heart (dedication to Christ and His work); that is, the three groupings are study, action, and piety. In line with this same grouping, Habitual Grace, Sacraments, and Life in Grace explain living grace, while Actual Grace, Obstacles to Grace, and the Fourth Day explain how to overcome difficulties to achieve a full life in grace.

In short, there are several interrelationships among the talks, each of which illuminates a different aspect of the progression; however, the basic progression is by days. Each day of the weekend is an entity, and each is meant to do a different thing. The first day tells the candidate what he has to be, the second tells him what he must do, and the third day tells him what he needs and how he must act.

### The Spiritual Retreat:

The spiritual retreat provides a setting for the talks -- an introduction. It announces that the Tres Días weekend contains an answer to each candidate's problems (and, by implication, to all the problems of the world). It places the candidate before Christ, emphasizing the need to respond to Christ all the way, to have full faith in Him; that is, he must listen to what Christ says, turn to Him, and do whatever He says. -5-

The opening talks and the meditations consider both the person and his need of conversion, and Christ Himself. They start to sketch Christ's character, especially His love. They stress the need for self-examination and full response; idealism built on the willingness to believe that something great is possible; and self-surrender or dedication -- the willingness to put everything possible into Christ's work in the spirit of charity, concern for God and for other men. From this point on, the candidate is never allowed to forget that he is face to face with Christ, who is looking at him and asking something of him, and that he has to respond to Christ fully and unreservedly.

### The First Day

The five talks of the first day are intended to present the ideal picture of the Christian living the life of grace. The first talk is Ideal, which asks the question of what it is to be a man. The answer is that a man is that being in all creation who lives by an ideal, which directs his life. The talk goes on to consider what an ideal is, and how it functions in a human life. At the end of the talk, the candidates are asked to confront their lives and really discover what their ideal is by asking themselves where their free time, their money, and their thoughts are directed. During the talk, most of the candidates will be telling themselves that their ideal is to be a Christian. At the end of the talk, they should be well on the road to learning what their true ideals are.

The second talk, Habitual Grace, presents the central idea of Tres Días -- life in grace. This is the Christian ideal, that to which God is calling all men, and the only truly human ideal. The talk presents life in grace as a gift, a reality that is the most valuable thing that a man can have. It describes the life in grace in a number of images, emphasizing how much good it does for those who accept it, and explaining the various ways in which it is a personal relationship to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Everything else in the weekend is based on this talk because it provides the key to human happiness for each man and for the whole world.

The third talk, Layman in the Church, makes the connection between life in grace and the modern world. This connection is the Church, which is the community of those who live in grace, and the channel of grace and of salvation for the world. The Church is the means which God has chosen to use to solve the world's problems. It is the means of bringing Christ to the world. The world can be saved by bringing it to live the life in grace. The candidate who began in Ideal by understanding better what it means to be a man, and who then was told what a great thing he was called to be -- a saint, a man living in grace -- now is told that he is called to solve the problems of the world, to be an apostle, and that this too is what it means to be a Christian. The talk ends with a consideration of the relationship of the candidate's role as an active church member to the role of the church organization and leadership. If he is to fulfill his great mission, the layman must work within the organized church, under the leadership of its chosen leaders. This talk presents the basis for the theory of apostolic action in Tres Días.

The fourth talk, Actual Grace, outlines a simple theme: God is ready at all times to help those who need Him, and that everyone needs His help. The talk is situated after the two talks (Habitual Grace and Layman in the Church) which explain what it is to be a Christian. Actual Grace says that being a Christian is possible, because God always helps when help is needed. All that each person has to do is to ask for the help of God, and accept it when it comes. In short, there is no excuse for not doing what Christ is asking in



the Tres Días weekend. It is at the end of this talk that the first palanca letters are read, by means of which the candidates are made aware that others take the life in grace seriously. They get a glimpse into the lives of others who are living the life in grace both by what the letters say about the life in grace and by what the Christian community is doing as palanca. They come to know that, even if they are too weak to ask for or accept God's help, there is an army of people working and praying for them. It is an experience in community in the order of grace.

The last talk of the day, Piety, is a key talk in the weekend. It sums up the talks of the first day, and it presents the first basic step toward being an apostle. Every talk which follows it builds on this talk -- in fact, every talk which follows is an explanation of it. This talk presents the response of the individual to what has been learned about what it means to be a Christian. Simply put, the response is actually to be a Christian, which involves living the Christian ideal fully and unreservedly, directing the whole of one's life to God. The talk lays bare various ways of avoiding this full dedication to God. Then, through the living testimony of the speaker, it presents the picture of what it means to be a Christian. If it is done simply, directly, and forcefully, this talk has a tremendous effect, because it makes each person confront his own life and the partialness of his response to Christ. Then he realizes that he has a lot to learn about being a Christian and, through the suggestions at the end of the talk, he sees that part of being a Christian is a life of prayer and a desire to bring others to Christ. Piety does not say how to direct one's life to God, except in general terms. The things which must be done are talked about, but not explained. The explanations are for later talks.

### The Second Day

The first day has left the candidates with a question: how do I become pious, how do I live this life in grace, how do I make this life, with all that is in it, my ideal. The second day is dedicated to showing him how to do this -- in a practical way. He is told that the solution is, first of all, to draw closer to Christ, coming to know Him as a person, following Him, doing what He commands, and being like Him. The second day is the day of Christ, the day in which the person of Christ is to be emphasized. What should also become clearer as the day progresses is that the mature follower of Christ is meant to be a leader. Like Christ Himself, he is meant to lead men to the life in grace. The message of the second day is that the candidate must form himself as a leader through piety -- treated primarily in connection with a sacramental life and informal prayer with Christ --, study, and action. Summed up, the message of the second day is formation as a Christian leader through drawing closer to Christ and learning what Christ did.

The opening meditation of the second day is particularly important for the progression of talks during this day. It presents the person of Christ as a person living here and now. Christ is actually among us, and He can be known by means of the gospels. He is a man who is with men now, and He is someone who can be imitated, because He is a man. In this regard, His role as a leader is drawn out. Christ is a leader of men, and the candidate will realize by the end of the day that he, too, must be a leader of men. Christ is a leader worthy to follow.

The first talk of the day is Study, which is meant to give a badly-needed explanation. The candidate by this time realizes that he must live in grace, but he lacks a concrete idea of what this means. The lesson of this talk is that one must use his head to learn how to live in grace, and that learning

what to do as a Christian is, in fact, a never-ending task. This idea is first gotten across by explaining another aspect of the idea of piety. Where the Piety talk stressed the direction of one's whole life to God, the Study talk works toward the idea of piety as life. It is a special kind of life; therefore, all of life has to be remade. Consequently, it is necessary to study how to live as a Christian. The rest of the talk explains how to study in a way that makes the candidates feel a need of it. At the same time, it makes clear how study itself is a part of piety -- a kind of prayer, a means of becoming a saint -- and how it is directed toward action, because it is formation for apostolic action.

The second talk of the day is Sacraments. This is the talk in which the possibility and importance of a personal relationship with Christ is stressed. He comes to men and helps them through the Sacraments. The Sacraments are the means of living all of life in a relationship with Christ; they are Christ's offer of friendship to men. The talk should explain how the intimacy with Christ which was talked about in the meditation is possible; therefore, it does not discuss the technicalities of each sacrament, nor provide a dissertation on how to live life as a Christian, but rather it stresses the presence of Christ in the person of each Christian's life through the Sacraments. It ends with Holy Communion treated as the most vivid example of the presence of Christ and His desire to be with men, and it thereby opens up the way to visits around the altar.

The third talk is Action, which continues the explanation of what to do in order to be pious. The piety talk said that the perfection of piety is apostolic action. Without action, piety cannot stay alive. This talk must make this point very clearly, but it must make the reverse point just as strongly: apostolic action must come from piety. The apostle must live the life in grace fully. Apostolic action is a means of bringing men to Christ, helping them to live the life in grace. This talk, like the study talk, is very practical. It explains how action has to be linked to piety, and it starts the explanation of how apostolic action is carried out -- by befriending a person and then trying to make him a friend of Christ. The bulk of the talk is actually an explanation of how to do it. It is only a limited explanation of apostolic action as a whole; more will be explained later. It presents the basis, though: personal contact with a concern for making others friends of Christ so that they, too, might function as leaders in forming a Christian life.

The fourth talk is Obstacles to Grace, which explains what will tend to draw Christians away from their ideal. It is intended to be realistic and explanatory, pointing out clearly what obstacles stand in the path, and what must be done to avoid them. By showing what the alternative involves, it makes the life in grace appear more clearly. At the end of this talk, the candidates appreciate the meaning of the life in grace, and know some more things that they can do to live it: namely, mortification, prayer, avoiding occasions of sin, and spiritual direction.

The last talk of the day, Leaders, should make all the talks of the day fall into place. Like Piety, it presents the picture of the man who has done everything which the talks of the day discussed. He has become a leader who knows Christ well and who follows Him. He has a Christian personality -- a personality that is centered on a Christian axis -- and he is trying to become a saint. By being fully a Christian, a person will become a leader because he will influence those around him, leading them to the life in grace. In character with all of the talks of the second day, this talk emphasizes that becoming a leader is hard work. It takes dedicated effort and careful formation. It cannot just be wished for. In summarizing the day and presenting a picture of the leader, this talk

also emphasizes how successful the things that have been presented during the day really are. This is the talk of the day which is the most inspiring because, like the piety talk, its message is: "This works!"

### The Third Day

The third day presents the method of Tres Dias and its approach to the apostolate. What was presented in the first two days, although oriented to making clear the third day, is nothing that is unique to Tres Dias. It is the third day which presents the particular theory of the weekend.

On the third day, the weekend opens out to consider society. This is not to say that the rest of the weekend ignored society completely; however, it is only during the third day that the approach to winning society (the environment) for Christ is treated as a topic. The talks of the third day are geared to present a confident, optimistic view of the Church in the world. The third day, in short, presents the plans for Christian communities which radiate Christian life into the environment.

The meditation of the third day, like that of the second day, has an integral role to play in the progression of talks. The meditation is Christ's message to the candidates. In the meditation, the ministers present Christ's call to the apostolate. It is not the first time that the necessity of apostolate has been talked about, but it is the first time that it is presented so dramatically as the command of Christ, the Christ who became known as friend during the second day. He sends the candidates out to bear fruit, which is the key to apostolic action -- contact with Christ and contact with other Christians is the message. Giving life to this message is the job of the talks of the third day. The enthusiasm in their presentation should make the final note of the meditation indelible: "Have courage; I have overcome the world."

The first talk of the third day is Study of the Environment. This talk moves the leader of the second day out into the environment he has always lived in to take another look at it now that he understands life in grace more clearly, and tries to lead him to an understanding of what he has to do in it. A major part of the talk is a consideration of the environment from only one point of view: the relation of people in it to God and to the life in grace. All the problems of the environment are not considered, but only those which involve a person's relation to a living piety. The talk is meant to explain how the candidate has to understand the situations he will find himself in, in terms of their relationships to God. The talk also explains what must be done by the candidate to enable him to work effectively in the environment, and to bring others to Christ. It restates the method presented in Action, but it also adds to the method of apostolic action by pointing out the need to deal with the environment as a whole, together with the situations in the environment. At the end of this talk, the candidate should have a clear idea of the problems and of what he must do. He should also feel the need of help to do it.

The second talk of the third day is Life in Grace. This talk presents the idea of the service sheet, the plan for structuring one's life in such a way that one can understand what must be done and how to do it. However, the main point of the talk is the first part of the secret of apostolic action: contact with Christ. In this talk, the minister explains very carefully the particular things which directly help toward a full piety. The other two parts of the service sheet, study and action, are not worked out in the weekend, because they must be related directly to the work that the candidate will do after the weekend. In other words, this talk presents the first part of the means of tackling the environment.

The third talk of the day is Christian Community in Action. This is the key talk of the third day, the talk which should make clear how all the other talks fit together. By the time this talk is reached, the candidate should have a clear picture of the need for apostolate and of what kinds of things need to be done to bring people to a friendship with Christ, which is the basis for a transformation of society. He should also have a clear picture of the importance of being a living member of the Church. This talk should bring these two ideas together so that the candidate can see that the problem of the environment, the problem of remaking the world, can only be solved through formation of Christian life. The talk must first make clear that the idea of working on individuals to save them, and of working in organizations, are only partial solutions to the problem. Then, the full solution is presented -- the building of apostolic Christian communities, groups of people living a fully Christian and therefore apostolic life together. All groups of Christians -- the family, the parish or congregation, and the apostolic organizations -- must function this way. Then a picture of how to structure Christian community is presented, with a treatment of the place of the minister as a leader of the Christian community in action, and with a picture of a group of men, working together to bring the world to Christ by spreading the Christian message. The talk concludes by vividly linking apostolic action with the desire of Christ on the cross to save man. At the end of the talk, the candidates should feel the need to work with others, and they should feel the desire to make Christ known and loved in their environments.

The fourth talk is Total Security. This is the talk in which the linking together of the leaders is accomplished. With the service sheet, it is the solution to the problem which almost everyone feels -- how to maintain what they have found in Tres Días. This talk explains the group reunion, and how the candidates can work with a group of friends on their lives in grace. It is the linkage with other Christian leaders, other pescadores (Tres Días alumni; literally, "fishermen"), which provides the basis for forming Christian life. With Life in Grace, Total Security provides the method which each person needs to function as a leader in a dynamic Christian community in action.

The fifth talk is The Fourth Day. This is the talk which specifically addresses the problems of perseverance as a leader in a vital Christian community in action. Like the talks on piety and leaders, the last talks of the first two days, this talk presents a picture of what a person is like who has learned the lessons of the third day -- the pescador, the man who makes use of the method and vision presented in the Tres Días weekend. At this point in the weekend, there is nothing more to explain. All the methods and concepts have been presented, and the candidate is equipped, at least in a rough way, to become a pescador. This talk deals with what still lies ahead of him -- the things he is called to do, the problems to be avoided, and the application of the successful method which has been given to him in the weekend. The weekend should end with a triumphant picture of what it is to live the truths learned in the weekend.

THE DYNAMICS OF TRES DÍAS  
Role of the Team Member

Part I

What are we trying to achieve in Tres Días? First, and foremost, we are trying to build a community -- a community abounding in love, joy, and peace. Then too, we are also trying to achieve an example of Christian life, especially in the three aspects of piety, study, and action.

To form this community, and to provide an example to the candidates of the Christian life, the team must itself be a community before the weekend of Tres Días. On Thursday night, when the team arrives, it must be a formed community. This is done by means of a series of team meetings (usually six) which are held weekly just before the weekend itself begins.

The team forms itself by discussing the talks, by sharing in the liturgy, and by making group reunions with each other (the team meetings are a form of group reunion). On Thursday night, the team members spread out among the candidates, and thus begin the formation of a larger community of the Tres Días weekend. They do this in the same way as they formed the team. We have discussion, sharing in the liturgy and otherwise, and develop an understanding of each other. Our hope for the weekend is to evoke a commitment from each one of the candidates. This commitment doesn't involve Tres Días as such, but rather a larger community -- the outside world. The candidates will branch out into the world and have an effect on it. They will try to form the world in which they live into a Christian community. So, you see, the team which comes to Tres Días on Thursday night is the core of a new Christian community which will be formed in the weekend.

The spiritual director of Tres Días helps to form the team into a community before the weekend begins; but when he arrives on Thursday night, he devotes his attention to the candidates, and begins his task of bringing them together into a community. The spiritual director, like the other team members, is there for the candidates; therefore, it is very important that the team be well-formed as a community before the weekend begins. There should be no team formation at the Tres Días weekend; the weekend is all for the candidates.

If you're like most pescadores (or cursillistas), you don't remember everything that happened in your weekend as a candidate, so a bit of review might help to give you an idea of what the team members should be doing. The weekend begins at the moment when the first candidate arrives on Thursday night -- and that's when the team member's work begins. Team members should arrive early on Thursday, and should be present (and reasonably settled) to greet the candidates as they arrive. The team creates a welcoming atmosphere, an atmosphere which suggests that this is a good place to be, regardless of the reasons the candidates might have for being there.

You will probably remember how apprehensive you were on Thursday night when you began your weekend as a candidate. You came into a room, found a bunk, and then there were a bunch of strangers. Somebody, somewhere along the line, talked to you and helped you to feel like one of the group that night. This is the role of the team member on Thursday night! Draw the candidates in, and get to know them. Table assignments will be reviewed at the team meeting that night, and every candidate should be well-known to someone at the team meeting. Your major job as a team member is to get to know the candidates.

Your work as a team member begins immediately. You start by doing the little things -- the coffee and donuts provide a fine community-building setting. You're eating and sharing with each other, and this draws people together. Start in small ways: help candidates with their coffee, help them to find their bunks, help with anything. Just don't make it obvious that you're running things.

The first meeting on Thursday night is for indoctrination, and it usually begins with a joke session. It's good to know the dynamics of joke sessions. Telling a joke gives someone a chance to speak to people. He may never have a chance, or never have a reason to talk to others, without first breaking the ice by getting up to tell a joke. Laughter draws people together, and promotes spontaneous sharing. The problem we sometimes have with jokes is keeping them clean; this is another job for the team member. If you find the jokes tending to the raw side, raise your hand and get them back on the right track. Dirty jokes don't contribute much to the spiritual environment of Tres Días, to be sure.

The next part of the first meeting is the introduction of team members and candidates. Each person should give his name, and say where he's from. Again, this gives the candidates a chance to stand up and say something to the group. When your turn comes, just stand up and say something like: "My name is so-and-so, and I'm a member of the team." Identifying yourself as a member of the team at this point is very important -- we're not spies, and we don't want anyone to think that we are. It really doesn't make much difference that the candidates know you're a member of the team, but it's important that you say so. The candidates probably won't remember who the team members are for a while, but they are likely to remember that you were identified. If you are asked whether you are a team member, acknowledge it very simply. Also, if you can do it without being obvious, avoid gathering in groups of team members -- disperse the team among the candidates. It's not good to have several people in a row who get up and say, "I'm a team member."

Another pitfall to avoid is trying to take over another team member's duties -- such as a table leader doing an auxiliary's job, distributing song sheets and making coffee. There is a danger, especially among more experienced team members, that knowing what should happen at a particular time will make us anxious for it to happen, and we will give our attention to the schedule instead of to the candidates. Just play it cool, and let everyone play his own role. Remember that our Lord is in control, not you!

After the introductions, the Rector will make some opening remarks, and then there is a singing session. Singing is a key dynamic in the entire weekend. It helps to get people involved, and it's a good way to build community. Some people will hold back in their singing, but gradually they will get into the spirit, and by Sunday morning they might even be the loudest singers around.

Team members are always the leaders. In the prayers, the singing, moving from one place to another, answering the bell promptly -- in all things, they are the leaders.

On Thursday night, after the initial meeting, the spiritual retreat begins. To quote from the Cursillo Leaders' Manual, "The aim of the spiritual retreat is to awaken the moral conscience of the cursillista and make him feel the desire to be in God's grace as a result of careful self-examination." The idea of the retreat is to know yourself, to look into yourself, and to check up on your personal relationship with God.

The retreat is a very important part of the weekend. When the silence begins, we go to the chapel for the meditation, and then retire for the night. Team members must remember to set an example for the candidates during the silence. Don't be talking among yourselves. Be a leader in the retreat, as in other phases of the weekend.

On Thursday evening, there is a team meeting. Like all team meetings, it is held in strict confidence -- this is an extremely important point! At this meeting, final table assignments are made. Initial assignments will have been made on the basis of the contents of the applications; however, these assignments will often need to be adjusted after you have gotten to know the candidates a little.

The team meetings during the weekend are in the same spirit as the team meetings

which preceded the weekend. You plan the following day's activities, answer any questions, discuss any particular problems, and then you pray together. It's usually a spontaneous prayer that closes the team meeting each night. Spontaneous prayer is a beautiful way of building community in the team and among the candidates.

After the Thursday night team meeting, there is not likely to be any problem in getting people to bed, because there's nothing else to do. It is probably appropriate at this point to mention the necessity of sleep during the weekend. The aim of the weekend is not to tire the candidates or to wear them down, and it is not good for team members to overextend themselves, either. Get as much sleep as you can! On the other hand, if someone is pouring his heart out to you at 1:00 in the morning, don't say, "I'm sorry, but I've got to go to bed." Sleep isn't that necessary. Stay with him as long as he needs you; but when the talk turns to baseball, skiing, or any other incidental topic, then you can say, "I think it's time to get some sleep."

## Part II

Friday morning is a continuation of the retreat. When you arise, you're still in silence -- and the team members are still the leaders. Set the pace for the candidates. The silence continues to bring them face to face with themselves:

The morning liturgy is subdued, probably much like what the candidates have been experiencing in their own weekly worship. The liturgy is subdued at this point so that it can grow with the community. As the team and candidates gradually form a community, the unity and love that is found can be expressed more fully in each day's liturgy.

After the liturgy the silence is broken, and it is time for breakfast. At the breakfast table, get to know the person across from you, and the ones next to you. This is another chance to build community by getting to know each other a little better.

After breakfast there is free time. The role of team members during free periods in the weekend is very important. The free periods give team members and candidates a chance to meet "eyeball to eyeball" on a one-to-one basis. Make yourself available to the candidates during this time -- don't congregate with other team members in a corner somewhere to discuss talks, candidates, the weekend, or whatever. Get with the candidates, and do your talking to them.

At the first session in the morning the candidates are seated according to the table assignments made the previous night. Team members should concentrate on building community at the table at which they are seated. Community building starts at the table, but it will grow through the entire group later. The candidates are grouped at the tables according to diverse ages, occupations, denominations, and any other factors that may help them to learn from one another in their discussions.

The Ideals talk is first. As is true of all laymen's talks (except Piety), Ideals should not last more than half an hour. This is because the dynamics of the weekend don't necessarily go on when the professor is speaking. For the most part, the community building occurs during the table discussions. Candidates share ideas, and build upon one another's ideas. Very often, what the candidates say to one another is more important to the group than what was said by the professor. Thus, it really isn't necessary to give a long talk. If you can say what you have to say in twenty minutes, that's just fine! We all reach a point of maximum effectiveness, at which we should summarize and quit before the talk begins to drag.

It is very important for you, as a team member, to take notes during the talks. First of all, it is your task to set an example for the candidates, who should approach the weekend as a course in Christianity. Secondly, you may be asked to give the same talk in a future Tres Días weekend. Thirdly, you will need notes for

the weekend critique meeting. After the Tres Dias weekend, there will be one last team meeting to discuss what happened on the weekend and to suggest ways to do it better. As part of the critique, you will review each talk; therefore, you should have notes on the talks -- effectiveness, getting the theme across, and whether a talk evoked table discussions which were right on target, or which missed the point altogether. This critique can be helpful to the professor who gave the talk, by enabling him to be a more effective speaker the next time, and it is helpful to the team as a whole, because it gives each team member a better understanding of the dynamics of the weekend and provides a base of knowledge for future weekends.

As has been said before, the table discussions which follow each talk really build community. Here again, you have a role to play. Try to let the table leader take charge of the discussion. You're just there to make an occasional comment, to try to guide the discussion along the theme of the talk, and to take your turn as table secretary with all the other table members. Ask meaningful questions when you can. If the candidates get off the track, bring them back with a question like, "Well, what did the speaker really mean by this?", or, "I didn't quite get what he was saying at that point." In short, contribute, but don't dominate.

Practice the art of creative listening, regarding which Karl Menninger says:

"Listening is a magnetic and strange thing. It's a creative force. The friends who listen to us are the ones that we move toward. When we are listened to it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life. It makes people happy and free when they are listened to. When we listen to people there is an alternating current and this recharges us so that we never get tired of each other. We are constantly being recreated. I discovered all this about three years ago and it truly made a revolutionary change in my life. Before that when I went to a party I would think anxiously, 'Now try hard, be lively, and say bright things, talk, don't let down.' And when tired, I would drink a lot of coffee to keep this up. But now, before going to a party I tell myself to listen with affection to anyone who talks to me. To be in their shoes when they talk. To try to know them without my mind pressing against theirs, or arguing or changing the subject. My attitude is: Tell me more. This person is showing me his soul. It is a little dry and meager and full of grinding talk just now, but presently he will begin to think, not just automatically to talk. He will show his true self, then he will be wonderfully alive."

A good way to stimulate discussion is to say to someone, "Boy, you're really concerned about this, aren't you?", and then let him express himself. Ask questions, be interested, and listen to him. The aim of the discussions is to have each table member personalize for himself the main theme of the last talk. A group expression is then obtained in the summary and the poster. This is most effective when everyone is involved and participating in the discussion, the summary, and the poster. For the team members, the rule remains: participate but don't dominate.

On Friday, posters are the usual thing; however, if someone (not a team member) suggests trying something else, like a skit or a song, go along with him. On Saturday, the Rector will normally suggest doing something other than posters. Whatever might be chosen as a medium of expression, avoid letting the "pro" at your table do all the work. It is important that all table members get involved.

As a team member, remember to change places at each meal, to get to know other candidates better. Try to talk about the events of the day, perhaps on specific talks or posters. Again, little acts of kindness at meal time are very important.

### Part III

On Friday afternoon we have the introduction of palanca, which is a very high point for many of the candidates. Up to this time, some of them probably hadn't gotten a thing out of the weekend. Now, all of a sudden, this palanca thing comes along, and



and they begin to realize that the Holy Spirit is alive, and that He's working through other people. This will be a new experience for most of them, and it sometimes gets to them. Some men may want to go off by themselves because they can't stand to be emotional in front of others. Don't push the palanca -- just let the Holy Spirit work through them, and let the candidates respond in their own way. We are not looking for a lot of emotion, but for a relaxed atmosphere. If you see someone who has a problem controlling his emotions, it may be best just to leave him alone.

The Cursillo Leaders' Manual states: "One of the main points of resistance in the cursillista will usually stem from his shying away from 'their desire to convert me'." At this point in the weekend, the candidate doesn't want to be converted, so don't force him. Let the Spirit work. It is God, not you, who changes the lives of people. ("Man proposes, but God disposes." Proverbs 19:21, The Living Bible)

Up to this point on Friday the weekend is pretty well subdued, and we're just trying to build community slowly. If we try to build it too fast, we could lose some of the candidates. We would like to have them all run at the same pace, and get to the finish line at the same time. We don't want to leave anybody behind on Sunday night; we want to have them all there, so we build community gradually. If there's a person who is a little bit slow in reacting to the weekend he may feel isolated and left out of the community. The more love, joy, and peace he sees around him, the more he may turn into himself and resist becoming a part of the group. The idea is to keep everyone in the community, to keep everyone moving at a rate that all can follow. In other words, the weekend should be geared to the slowest candidate, if this is at all possible. The safest way is to keep things subdued on Friday until after the Piety talk.

The chapel visit after the Piety talk brings out the seriousness of the weekend, in that the candidates are there, not just for a fun weekend, but to make a commitment to Christ. Commitment is the theme of the chapel visit.

At supper on Friday night there should be a little group singing session. This kind of loosens everyone up a bit, and the weekend begins to take on a more lively spirit. When you get to the poster party on Friday night, the whole group begins to experience a community feeling through the sharing, the applause, the laughing, and through each one relating to the group.

To this point, we were more concerned about creating community at the tables; but at the Friday evening poster party we begin to shape the whole community, involving each individual, not just in his table, but in the whole group. Your role is to be open to everyone that evening, to be charitable and encouraging, especially to those who are a little reluctant to get up and give the summary or talk about the poster. Whatever you do, though, don't try to force them. If someone just doesn't want to do it, then get up and say something like, "Some people just don't like to talk to a group," and let it go at that. Maybe on Saturday night, he'll come out of his shell.

Also, try not to sound too experienced in giving your summary or on your explanation of the poster. You know what the weekend is all about, but you must adjust yourself to acting like a candidate. However, don't fake anything, whatever you do. The worst thing that could happen to you as a team member would be just to play a role. Perhaps the greatest quality that you should have as a team member is just to be yourself -- entirely yourself.

After the evening session we have another team meeting. As was mentioned before, if you're talking to a candidate about himself or some problem he has, stay with him; skip the team meeting. This is also a good time for the candidates to get some counseling from the ministers, who should be available at this time. The team members at each table should try to get together before the team meeting to discuss possible problems, the progress at their table, or anything they might want to bring up at the team meeting. Extreme problems should be brought to the attention of the spiritual director and the rector; don't try to handle them alone.

#### Part IV

On Saturday, the liturgy is a high point. It is blended in beautifully with the Sacraments talk and the agape meal which follows it. Actually, the whole Tres Días weekend is simply a preparation of the community to celebrate the liturgy. At this liturgy we introduce the abrazo as a form of peace greeting, a very legitimate expression of Christian love.

On Saturday afternoon, each table is asked to make a chapel visit. The important element in this is freedom. Let the candidates be free to express themselves as they feel. One of the table leaders should start off the chapel visit. Silence in the chapel visit is beautiful, but there can be a lot of pressure in silence. We don't want to pressure anyone into praying aloud if he doesn't want to. So, if you've been in the chapel five minutes and nobody has said anything, then you start it off. If the silence continues for any length of time after that, it's best to end the chapel visit. It is the practice to pass the cross around during the chapel visit; however, it should be explained to the candidates that they may pass it on without saying anything, so that it doesn't put too much pressure on them. It's well to remember, though, that we shouldn't expect every detail of the weekend to work out perfectly as planned. Don't worry if things aren't just as you think they should be -- for the candidates, everything is great!

The Saturday night poster party (or skits) is a blast. Everyone is happy, especially after the agape, and it's hard to get people to bed. This is one reason for the chapel visit after the agape; in a gentle way, it says, "Now this is the end of a perfect day."

On Sunday, there is a tendency for the spirit of the weekend to drag. People are tired, the mechanics of the service sheet aren't too exciting, the tight structure of the weekend is loosened, and the candidates' thoughts turn back toward home. This is where you come in and take the lead again. You keep taking notes, keep the discussions going, and encourage the candidates. After the Life in Grace talk, you help the candidates with their service sheets. You suggest that they make a real commitment, but always something that they can live up to.

The gatherings by geographic area which follow the Total Security talk are an introduction to the Fourth Day program. Encourage and guide the candidates toward making group reunions. Tell them how much it means to you -- being sure, however, that it really does mean something to you, so you can be honest about it. The success of the weekend may be measured largely by the attendance of the candidates at group reunions. Tres Días is only the first step; the real work of the Christian community goes on in the Fourth Day.

In the afternoon there is more free time for relaxation, when the spiritual director should be available to the candidates. Here again, there is a good chance for you to meet the candidates eyeball to eyeball. At this point, some may be worried that they haven't gotten the message, or they may be concerned about how they'll be able to live up to their commitments. It may seem as if the whole weekend is falling apart. Well, don't panic, and don't worry if it seems that someone hasn't gotten the message. If someone appears to be still in his shell, just let him be. If a person hasn't opened himself to the community by this time, any attention or concern you show toward him will only turn him further inward. Wait for the closing, and just let the Holy Spirit work at His own pace. Some candidates will never respond, and some will respond only after the weekend is over; but we can never force a religious response from anyone. God always respects a person's freedom to love Him or not; how much more, then, must we respect each person's freedom to open himself to the Holy Spirit, to become part of the community, or not.

At the closing, the candidates begin to realize that they are part of a larger community of real, live Christians who really care about them. They see that living the Fourth Day is possible, because these people who came to the closing are living it.

At the closing, the emphasis is on the testimony of the candidates. The closing is for the candidates. We enjoy meeting our friends there, and it's fun to sing joyous songs, but the main reason we're at the closing is to welcome the candidates into the larger Christian community. At the closing, the team plays a minor role.

After the closing, the reception line tends toward mass confusion. Try to minimize the confusion by following the prescribed directions, and by not spending a long time talking to one person or another.

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Remember that you are a team member for the candidates. You are a participant in the weekend for no reason other than for the candidates. As a team member, you must understand what your role is, you must be convinced of its worth, you must be committed to the task, and you must perform it in the spirit of love, giving yourselves totally to the candidates who are entrusted to you.

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Source:

The Dynamics of The Cursillo,  
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