STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT
STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT
SYNTHESIS OF ITS CONTENT AND CHARACTERISTIC NOTES

THEME
The actions of a Christian are always carried out within the circumstances, the time, and the place that the person already occupies, and the Christianization of their environment is the consequence of the Father's dream.

It is necessary to identify the areas in which the task of Christianization is to take place: ourselves, our companions (those that accompany us) and the environment. In each area it is necessary to know the actual circumstances, in order to find the most effective means to Christianize them. In this way, one will have an accurate view of the possibilities, and the most effective way to make it a reality, together with our brothers and sisters. This is the most practical, attainable and Christian way of giving backbone to Christianity.

NOTE
The rollo, while focusing on what is obvious, should show clearly the existence of the three fronts, the importance of applying the appropriate tactics to each area, and of not confusing tactics with the need to be in personal contact with the reality. The rollo needs to be developed with clarity so that the candidates will understand its purpose. The effectiveness of the response of the candidates depends on this.

THE ENVIRONMENT
The environment is the melding of ideas; people, and circumstance that come together in a certain time and place, it is the purpose of the plans the Father has for you.

Should be known accurately.
Observing that it is made up of three fronts:
• Ourselves
• Our companions – family–work–hobbies
• The others (environment)

In order to use effective means.
Through the use of diverse, evangelical and well-considered tactics, planned for each of the fronts.

To become an effective Christian.

SITUATION
It is the first rollo of the third day. After this rollo, the Rector(a) suggests again that they should continue to visit the Blessed Sacrament and he/she says that, starting from now, the Cursillo® leaders will begin signing the Pilgrim's Guides. This gives a further opportunity for the leaders to get to know those they haven't had a chance to speak with.
ATMOSPHERE

The Cursillo®, at this time, is usually infused with a climate of overflowing Grace and an admiration for each other that will keep on growing until the Closing. The Cursillista is already concerned with how to communicate to the others in their environment what they have discovered, assimilated and lived, and it is possible that some individuals may have some prejudices. However, they are open to listen but also to accept all that they are told.

OBJECTIVE

After the morning meditation, the message of Christ to the candidate, a restlessness to do something is awakened in the candidate. With their heads full of ideas and their hearts filled with eagerness, they feel the call to respond to Christ and to reach out in their surroundings. But questions and fears arise; how does one go about doing this, we all know of the indifference and materialism of people in the world.

This rollo wants to invite and encourage all in the transformation of their environments, stressing that we are not to detest and flee from the world, but are called to bring a Christian influence to that world.

Each has to see that one cannot take on the whole world by oneself, but by applying one's mind and intelligence, and studying one's "field of operations," search out what makes up their environments, and introduce Christ there. This is done in a natural way, by being one's normal self.

We are to begin with "ourselves" (the convinced will convince others) then reach out to the "others", and thereby influence the environments.

In looking for the place that the Father is asking each to work in, it will be found that it is most likely the very same environments that the person was living in when they came to the Cursillo®.

TECHNIQUE

It should be very clear in the development of the outline by constant use of irony which will reveal the absurdity of ingenuous attitudes. This is the same method that is used in the Piety rollo to point out what false Piety is. It must reveal a sureness of judgment that can only be born out of the personal experience of the truths they have encountered.

STYLE

The rollo should breathe joy and certainty of the triumphant victory of Christ in the environments in order to usher in the triumphant climate that permeates the third day of the Cursillo®.
STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION

"De Colores" is the joyful expression of the Cursillista who lives in Grace.

The Leaders rollo that we heard yesterday afternoon spoke of two truths.

First: the purpose of this Cursillo® weekend is not to just "make good people" but to nurture and forge leaders who show the way and by the Grace of God will go back into the world and make a difference.

Second: to do this, each needs a clear knowledge of the ideal and enthusiasm for it. Each needs an in-depth understanding of the reality of the world.

Towards this end, this rollo is in two parts, the first is to explain the definition of environment and increase our understanding of its influence in one's life, and secondly, how to influence the different environments and make a difference.

2. DEFINITION

Environment is the sum of circumstances that come together in a certain time and place.

Study of the Environment will then be the application of the understanding to know the sum of ideas and circumstances that concur in a specific time and place.

3. IMPORTANCE OF WINNING THE ENVIRONMENT

To win the environment is fundamental.

A. All of us live most of our lives as an integral part of various groupings of people in our job, our family life, our entertainment, our daily living.

B. Within each of these groupings there are certain attitudes and ideas that are acceptable to the group, certain types of behavior are encouraged, and certain types of personalities will be predominant.

Each environment has a vital impact in the people within it. It is so vital that people tend to conform to the spirit being generated there. This weekend gives us "the solution", which is the life of Grace and its consequences.

C. But in addition, it is necessary that the solution be properly applied. Even if we have the proper solution, if it is not carried out it will fail. If we don't take the medicine the Doctor prescribes and in the dosage he recommends, how we can get better. The truth by halves satisfies no one and leads no where. This has been demonstrated by the thousands who have understood what is being said here.

[The rollista should provide a brief testimony (or an example) of how his/her environment(s) has influenced their life and how he/she has influenced the environment.]
4. **BATTLE PLAN**

So how do we win environments, bring them to Christ? We need to rebuild them on the foundation of a life with Christ. Cursillo® proposes a practical method that works: There are three "battlefronts" in the process that we have to concentrate on:

- **First**: "ourselves"—strengthen and convince ourselves that Christ is the answer.
- **Second**: the area of the "others"—acquaintances, associates, casual friends—and the process of getting to know them, treating them with dignity, respect and as persons. We will then further discuss the "environment", its make up and how best to approach the "others" with the good news.
- **Third**: the environment.

(1) The First Front (Ourselves)

A. **Will**: First we must turn our will up to the highest setting. This is what is needed. If we do not have determination and make up our minds to do it, nothing will happen. We must be apostles, not just do apostolic things, we must be Christians, not just do Christian things.

B. **Prayer**: Prayer is the "password" of the apostle. All successful apostolic undertakings have at their core, prayer. Our strength and conviction will come from this. Without Grace, our efforts will go nowhere. Without Christ in our lives, how could we possibly think about introducing Him to others? We must go into our surroundings with Him, hand in hand.

C. **Mind**: It is necessary that we use our God given minds and apply our intelligence fully, just as we do in our jobs or businesses ("be as meek as a lamb and clever as a fox", just think how resourceful we can be when we really want something,) but, it is done in collaboration with Christ and He makes up for our limitations.

D. **Heart**: We are called to be all things to people in order to gain them for Christ; but people will quickly see the inauthentic, the insincere. Show charity, gentleness and respect when dealing with people. Often, the best Saints come from the "roughest of diamonds", the marginalized, those now distant from God. Marvelous things can happen when we go with God and don't worry about whether or not we have a parachute on.

(2) The Second Front (The Others)

An Overview: Let's examine the "others" by taking reconnaissance flight over what is out there and see if we can recognize some of the various types of people and the various groups they might fit into. We might even recognize ourselves in these different classifications for the environments can be a mirror, reflecting back to us what we are or what we were, or are becoming. This overview can sometimes be a little rough.

We will find some Saints out there and from there we will see a descending scale of less and less holiness, to those totally separated from God, and even atheists.

A. **First Group**: Believe in God, they love God, they want to "do good".
   - Authentic: They think and act as Catholics, they practice their faith 24 hours per day, they are apostles and it shows in how they live their lives, they are
longed for on our Weekends, they are the Leaders that were talked about in the Leaders rollo last night.

- Quiet ones: They think as Christians but they love their easy chairs. They admire those with faith but they are prone to just thinking about it.
- Lovers of Practices: Hover around the Church, altar kissers, "experts", sanctimonious, lack a balanced approach, attached to strange forms.
- Honest: They are normally honest about their faith except when they are not. They have good will but are lax in discipline, they are less than they could be.

Common Denominator: They try to be Catholic always.

B. Second Group: Believe in God, they love God, they want to "feel good".

- Need to be nudged: Limited self motivation, need to be nudged by someone to wake them up, be it a family member, friend, priest, teacher, boss, but they soon go back to sleep.
- Spouse/Associate: The sweetheart of, the husband of, puts the "pressure" on.
- When it thunders: Some disaster, the noise wakes them up.
- Impossible situations: Nowhere else to turn, desperate.
- For own convenience: Self serving, when it suits them.
- Through irony: They sympathize with Catholic criterion, say one thing, but do something else.
- Through vanity: Go to masses in fancy Churches, go to be seen, socially beneficial.
- In theory: They are Catholic if they can be and if they can't they are not and are sorry for it.
- Medals and symbols: They have only the "trade mark", if they lose their medal, they feel nervous, unsafe.
- By association: Friends of the priest, pay their dues so they can take part in the processions.

Common Denominator: They try, at times, to be Catholic.

C. Third Group: Believe in God but nothing more.

- Stiff necked: The snobs, try to please those that rank above and ignore those below.
- A thick skin: They miss Mass and don't even notice it.
- A dirty mouth: They gossip and tell crude jokes.
- Wear dark glasses: They don't see reality; they think they know it all.

Common Denominator: They are Catholics at random.
D. Fourth Group: Do not believe because they do not know God.

They are far away from God. They do not want to know because they never heard of God as He really is. No one ever introduced God to them in a proper way.

- The indifferent: Uninterested ones, made their first communion but nothing since.
- The misguided: Their lives are not orderly, but sinful.
- The egocentric: Make their own religion through ignorance, comfort, convenience, lax conscience.
- Semi-atheist: Say they believe in God but not in priests or the Church.

Common Denominator: Do not believe in God because of ignorance of Him.

E. Fifth Group: Do not believe in God because He does not exist.

- Practicing atheists: They say there is no God and are often deeply convinced of this.
- Intellectual atheists: Use their intelligence to kill the idea of God in the mind of the believers.

Common Denominator: There is no God.

How to approach the "others":
In the first front, we approach "ourselves" first through our will, then prayer, mind and lastly, the heart. In the second front, in approaching the "others", we basically use the reverse sequence, first the heart, then the mind, will, and then lastly, introducing them to prayer.

A. Heart: If we do not reach and influence the heart first, not much will happen. For the relationship to be authentic, it must be based on true charity and understanding.

B. Mind: From the heart, go to the mind. This is not as difficult as it first seems because, as Christians, we all have the seed of Grace that was planted in us at our Baptisms.

C. Will: We must bring our companions along with us.

D. Prayer: Grace from the Father will lead them to prayer.

(3) The Third Front (The Environment):

This third front is the consequence of beginning the process with "ourselves" first and the "others" second. All those that take the Gospel seriously and are authentic about it will face the problem of having to overcome the obstacles, the prejudices, and the preconceived ideas that hinder spiritual growth and the Christian vision.

Even when we are surrounded by seemingly impossible situations and there seems to be no way out, if we persevere in following the road; we will find the way to overcome the difficulties. This is how Grace works in our lives.
5. CONCLUSION

Before coming to the Cursillo®, each of our lives was made up of one or more groups of people who coexisted together and held similar ideas, likes and dislikes, and experienced a common restlessness. When we get back from this weekend, nothing will have changed there. In order for us to communicate in a new way with those in our surroundings, we will have to seek and find the way to help those who have wandered away from God.

Helping others to find their way back to the Father is what Cursillo® is all about. It is not to make it easier for us. It is to make it easier for the others. Cursillo® is about making it easier for those who have wandered away to come back to the Father.
STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

METHOD OF PREPARING THE ROLLO

Study of the Environment in relation with the "third" and "fourth" day.

The third day of the Cursillo is meant to complete the picture by showing the Cursillistas how they can act in the world to make Christianity penetrate and transform each part of the world.

Study of the environment is the rollo which presents the action "aim" of the Cursillo. It explains how what has been presented in the Cursillo so far can penetrate the world through the action of the Cursillista. It is this rollo which explains to the Cursillistas how they can direct themselves so that the life of grace, a life based upon a union with Christ, can transform each situation in the world.

Study of the environment begins by explaining to the Cursillistas what they must do apostolically. The rest of the third day explains how it is possible to accomplish what has been explained in Study of the Environment. In life in Grace the Cursillistas learn about a way of maintaining his/her strength for the apostolate through contact with Christ. In Christianity in Action they learn about the necessity of being part of an apostolic community for teamwork in the apostolate. In the rollo Cursillista Beyond the Cursillo, they learn about the dangers that might be faced when the candidates go back to their environments, but then giving them the very sure hope that we, as Cursillistas have found a method, a way of successful perseverance. In Total Security, they learn about the method witnessed in the rollo Cursillista Beyond the Cursillo, as a way of keeping contact with his fellow apostles to maintain their strength and increase their effectiveness.

The rollo should come across with one clear message which each Cursillistas should consider each environment that he/she is in, the people in it and the overall tone of it, and work to center it on Christ. In looking for the place that the Father is asking each to work in, it will be found that it is most likely the very same environments that the person was living in when they came to the Cursillo.

The rollo should give the Cursillistas an approach to handling whatever situation they are in. At the end of the rollo, the Cursillistas should feel the need for help. They should understand more clearly what they are up against, and this should have a calming effect, but it should also make them understand better that they need help. They should, in other words, be ready for an explanation of practical means for maintaining contact with Christ (Life in Grace rollo—"Service Sheet") and for maintaining a contact with their brothers and sisters (Total Security) of the kind that will help them achieve the transformation of the environments that they are working toward.

PREPARING THE ROLLO

Study of the Environment is the most tightly structured of all the Cursillo rollos. It is organized around the idea of the battle plan. Apostolic action is compared to a battle. In each situation, war is going on between the forces of Christ and the forces opposed to Christ. The Cursillista is fighting this battle on the side of Christ. And he/she has to consider three fronts in the battle. In other words in the effort to bring the world to live
the life of Christ, there are three things to focus on. First, "ourselves" (to strengthen and convince ourselves that Christ is the answer); second, the area of the "others" (the process of getting to know them, so that they are being drawn individually to Christ); and third, the environment as a whole (that the overall climate or tone become more favorable to Christianity). The rollo considers these three things in order, tying them together by the idea of the battle plan.

Section 1 – The Introduction, clarifies the term "De Colores" comparing it as a joyful stage of being in Grace. More importantly, it emphasizes on two points made on the Leaders rollo: one being that, as leaders who live in Grace, we must make a difference in the world (our environments); and the second being the need for us to understand the reality of those environments in order to be effective.

Section 2 defines and explains what is meant by "environment". There is an emphasis in this rollo on study. The rollo is a study of the environment, a study of what to do in the environments each person is in. They should think through how to approach the various situations they are in.

On occasions, this rollo has been confused and centered on specific statistical aspects confronting our society like abortion, drugs or alcohol addiction, political problems or juvenile delinquency, etc. It should not refer about the atmospheric environment that affects our planet either. None of that. The rollo must center on what is common to each Cursillista, what is common for every Christian in all situations of life. It centers on the relationship of those situations to Christ and the life He offers humanity. It centers on what is fundamental for being Christian. It centers on what all Cursillistas can and should do, the central problem—centering their environment on Christ.

Section 3 goes into a more in depth understanding of the environment. A person's environment is his/her family situations, his/her work situation, his/her social situation, etc. In other words, we are referring to people when they get together and form a situation of a certain type. It is the overall tone, the climate of the different situations a person finds himself/herself in.

It also talks about its essential impact on people within it and the importance of influencing it before it influences us. The Cursillistas has found the solution in the Cursillo®-Christ is the solution; the life of Grace needs to overflow in the environments. To win them, it is necessary that the solution be properly applied.

Section 4-A presents the idea of a "battle plan"—an approach to winning over the environment. The "battle" referred to is not a battle against people. The idea is not to conquer "others", the non-Christians or the non-Catholics or the non-Cursillistas. The battle goes on in the others and in ourselves; it is the battle between Christ and Satan, between good and evil. It is the fight that St. Paul was talking about when he said: "For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. So put on God's armor now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks..." (Eph. 6:12-13). In other words, the fight that is talked about is not a fight against other human beings, but for them; it is against sin, evil, and all the things that militate against people living a life with Christ.

"Plan" means that the approach should be thought out. The Cursillistas are not just being motivated and then turned loose. As it was said in the Action rollo, our apostolic action has to be well thought out, well planned.
Section 4-B present the three battle fronts: (1) Ourselves; (2) Others; (3) the Environment.

All three fronts must be handled at the same time, because they each depend on the others. The people are formed by the environment, and the environment is formed by the people—us included. These are not three different battles, but three different fronts on the same battle.

Section 4(1) presents the first front—ourselves. The Cursillistas must realize that if he/she is to become a successful apostle, they have to be courageous, authentic, truthful, living a conscious and growing Grace in such a way that it extends outward to the people around us. We must make use of four elements. They are: (1) Our Wills; (2) Our Knees; (3) Our Intellect; and (4) Our Hearts.

Section 4(2) presents the second front—others. The reconnaissance is an overview made to see how the terrain of the "others" is; those with whom the Cursillista lives his/her life in the various situations he/she is in. Although this is the largest part of this rollo, the rollista should not get hung-up on the reconnaissance flight. The rollo considers the types of people each Cursillista will come across, before actually considering what to do for them. "On the reconnaissance flight, we give them the impression that we know what things are like in their 'own back yard'" (Structure of Ideas, p. 52).

It is a study of individuals, that is, of types of people, not of trends or institutions. It only treats people from the religious point of view. It is interested in seeing how people live the life of grace and how they are dedicated (or not dedicated) to God. "Every classification of human types is necessarily incomplete, for man is infinitely diverse, but if it is made with psychological perception and penetration, it can contribute a great deal to a more exact knowledge of each of the men" (Structure of Ideas, p. 142).

The reconnaissance flight asks how each person in the environment is related to the ideal as set forth in the Piety rollo (the ideal of directing the whole of life to God).

Each environment has its own set of characteristic reactions to Christ and the Church. For example, a southern city in the United States is a different situation from a heavily Catholic, old New England town. A predominantly Catholic area will find the outline more applicable than a place in which Catholics are the minority. Therefore, this is a section [Section 4(2)] which can be adapted to the local situation, but without distorting the approach and message of the Cursillo®.

For your convenience, we have included another approach found in Structure of Ideas, pgs. 135-137. (See also pgs. 138-141.) This adaptation may only be done in conjunction with the local Secretariat and the School of Leaders, leaving a very small margin for the team members and the rollista. They can contribute suggestions on the types that exist in their environment and can gauge the effect of the treatment given in the rollo.

To Know
Three forms of life that explain the why of whatever is.

Each individual can reach in his life a determined depth according to the level at which he enters: deference, impulse, and drive.

Some are satisfied with superficial action because the conviction they have does not surmount the difficulties that are met; these are placed at the level of:
Deference (adherence through respect or acquiescence) before what is proposed to them. Others do not reach a sustained interest either because their conviction is intermittent, or because their will is; these waver according to the rhythm of the difficulties along the way, and are moved by.

Impulse (the road traversed between rests and hard shoves ahead) which arouses in them the very circumstance that they are living.

Others, finally, use their abilities to the utmost in order to achieve what they believe is worthwhile; these continually increase the tension that holds them in.

Drive (continued and renewed determination).

"He came to save what had perished."

**OBJECTIVE**

It is necessary to save what is perishing.

Clearly, those who travel a road diametrically opposed to Truth and at more than a hundred miles per hour are the ones who claim the first fruits of our effort.

On the other hand, the whole setup of "good" things is built only with the thought of the greatest comfort of the "good" in mind.

All authentic efficacy requires not only that each one occupy the place that belongs to him/her according to his/her way of life, but that these ways of life be hierarchically devised according to one’s ability.

All activity in the field of efficacy advances through the breach opened up by those with impetus, since those with impulse close, if they do not obstruct automatically with another contrary impulse, whatever breach others might have opened up; and those of deference have never been capable of opening any breach at all.

**STATE OF THE THREE FORMS OF ACTUAL CHRISTIANITY**

*Those of deference:*

Since they have never been concerned about good, they cannot conceive that deep down; it is the only root of all reasonable restlessness.

For them:

Those of deference are companions whom they can order about.
Those of impulse are individuals who may sometimes be of use to them.
Those of drive are the ones that it is best to keep at a distance, for the integrity of their person seems to them to disintegrate the comfort of their position in good. One must not take things too seriously.

*Those of impulse:*

Some who at the hour of truth are not capable of upholding their ideas, and others whose ideas are not capable of supporting them.

They assume more authority before those of deference because they feel bolder.
They shield themselves in face of the attitude of those of impulse because they suppose it normal and common to all, thereby making their own position secure. They sincerely admire those of drive, and when they are not sincere, they conceal it.

Those of drive:
Since the Truth is sought, is found, is lived and shared with the whole soul, those of drive for the best are needed to embody it in the world in a clear, living, convincing and truthful manner.

They, through being the light of the Lord through Grace, see the rest: souls; or rather talents for Truth and Good.

Indeed, one cannot open up the way if one does not have it, and those of drive are placed at the head of the array.

They will not seek, like those of deference, the greatest comfort of the good, but the strategic use of all and of everything so that with each one in his/her place and each striking his/her exact note, we may succeed in putting all the resources of life, with all their possible currents, in the service of the Gospel.

Section 4(2)A-F lists the five groups. So that you won't lose time fishing without catching, look for the most effective criterion. Of the five groups, the best fishing is in the first and the fourth (Structure of Ideas, p. 59).

The tactics on how to approach "others" are the same as those applied when winning "oneself" over; however, don't confuse the tactics; winning oneself over is not the same as trying to win others over (Structure of Ideas, p. 59); therefore, we must reverse the sequence of our tactic. We must put into practice what was shared with us about the "method of Apostolic Action" on the "Action" rollo. We must first win their heart with authentic true love and friendship, then, we need to increase that friendship in order to win their mind; what is believed, what is known, their thoughts, we need to speak to them about Christ and what the Christian life is. He/She has to see Christianity as something attractive and compelling. An apostle "magnetizes" their companions; we must appeal to their will and invite them to follow Christ indirectly. We need to bring that friend to Christ and with the Grace from the Father they will fall on their knees.

Section 4(3) concludes the rollo by saying that winning the environment—making it more Christian like, is a consequence of the process of the first two battle fronts. The rollista should bring across the reality of the obstacles (the mountains) that would be found on our path. Those who accept the Gospel don't always find their way without stumbling over obstacles. With perseverance and the Grace of the Lord we can make a change in our environments helping those who have wandered away from God find their way back to the Father.

Duration: Not more than 35 minutes.
CH. 4 - ROLLOS - STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

SAMPLE ROLLO

(35 MINUTES)

1. INTRODUCTION

We have come, with the grace of God, to this third day of Cursillo® and everything seems "De Colores". De Colores is the joyful expression of the Cursillista who lives in Grace. We call it "De Colores, because just as when the light crosses a prism (Crystal) the seven colors of the rainbow are formed, thus the same way, when the light of the Grace of God crosses the prism of our soul, flooding it of supernatural light, our soul is adorned with the seven virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Therefore: to all, "De Colores".

I'm sure that many of you, by the happiness you are experiencing, will have thought what a beautiful world this would be if all humanity lived De Colores; in Grace. Furthermore, I am sure you have thought about your relatives, friends, co-workers with whom you want to share this marvelous experience that you have discovered in the Cursillo®. You have also thought about the obstacles that you may encounter while attempting to convince them. Precisely, because they are immersed in some environments where by ignorance, by indifference or by lack of human respect, God is not at the center of their lives. Therefore, in this rollo, called "Study of the Environment", I would like to give you a plan to follow upon returning to your environments.

In the Leaders rollo that we heard yesterday afternoon, ____________ spoke of two truths.

First: The purpose of this Cursillo® weekend is not to just "make good people" but to nurture and forge leaders who show the way and by the Grace of God will go back into the world and make a difference.

Second: To do this, one needs a clear knowledge of the ideal and enthusiasm for it. One needs an in-depth understanding of the reality of the world.

Towards this end, this rollo is in two parts, the first is to explain the definition of environment and increase our understanding of its influence in one's life, and secondly, how to influence the different environments and make a difference.

2. DEFINITION - STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

We heard in the rollo of "Study", that study is the application of the understanding for the acquisition of a specific knowledge (to understand a science, art or position). Now we can add that by "environment" we understand the sum of ideas, persons, and circumstances that occur in a specific time and place when people get together. Study of the Environment will then be the application of the understanding to know the sum of ideas and circumstances that concur in a specific time and place.

The environment is like the air: it surrounds us and encircles us. We cannot live without it.
3. IMPORTANCE OF WINNING THE ENVIRONMENT

To win the environment is fundamental.

A. All of us live most of our lives as an integral part of various groupings of people. Let us think for a moment about our environments: our job, our family life, our diversions, our daily living; we are involved and surrounded by some specific environments which influence so powerfully in our way of being, in the formation and development of our personality.

B. Within each of these groupings there are certain attitudes and ideas that are acceptable to the group, certain types of behavior are encouraged, and certain types of personalities will be predominant. Within these groupings, the group's ideal is a combination of individual ideals affected by circumstances within the group and the society around it. And within each of these groupings, because of each person's presence to the other, a certain spirit is generated.

Each environment has a vital impact in the people within it. It is so vital that people tend to conform to the spirit being generated there.

[Example] In our environments we share about our jobs, business, sport, soap operas, the movies, etc. What is lacking or what is missing is the Grace of God, the Gospel, the Way, the Truth and the Life. What is needed are brave leaders that can flood the environments with Grace.

When a local, national or international event occurs: “9-11” for example, the war in Iraq, the catastrophic Tsunami in Asia, etc., these events become the primary focus in all the environments. When the event occurs, the normality of the environment is altered.

Is there anything greater in life than living in Grace? Why hasn't the ideal of living in Grace not overflowed into the environments? Because the majority of Christians, even those who think of themselves to be good, do not know or do not live as children of God, brothers and sisters of Christ and living temples of the Holy Spirit.

This Cursillo® gives us "the solution", and this is the life of Grace and its consequences.

C. But in addition, it is necessary that the solution be properly applied. Even if we have the proper solution, if it is not carried out it will fail. If we don't take the medicine the doctor prescribes and in the dosage he recommends, how we can get better. The truth by halves satisfies no one and leads no where.

[The rollista should provide a brief testimony (or an example) of how his/her environment(s) has influenced them and how he/she has influenced the environment.]

4. BATTLE PLAN

In the Action rollo, ________________ told us that the apostolic action has to be well thought out and planned.

So how do we win environments, bring others to Christ? To win the environment for Christ; to infect it of Grace, we need to put the ideas learned, lived and shared here in such a way that they can be reached by the others. We need to make a "battle plan". Unlike in a "war", our battle is not against people; it is a battle between Christ—through us—against the forces of evil. As Christians, we are called to rebuild the world around us—the number
of situations we find ourselves in or environments, such as family, work, social life, etc. We need to rebuild them on the foundation of a life with Christ.

Cursillo® proposes a practical method that works: There are three "battlefronts" in the process that we have to concentrate on:

- **First:** "ourselves" – Strengthen and convince ourselves that Christ is the answer.
- **Second:** the area of the "others" (acquaintances, associates, casual friends) and the process of getting to know them, treating them with dignity, respect and as persons. We will then further discuss the "environment", its make up and how best to approach the "others" in it with the good news.
- **Third:** the environment.

(1) The First Front – Ourselves:

When I say, "Ourselves", I mean to include all of us here and all those who think as we do. Your sponsors and others who have lived a Cursillo®, for instance. With these people we're going to feel one in the same spirit, and hold the same criterion; that is Jesus Christ. This will demand a lot of courage and a lot of effort in our own progressive conversion.

We need to make use of four elements. You probably remember ___________ talking about them briefly in the Action rollo yesterday. They are: (1) Our Wills; (2) Our Knees; (3) Our Intellect; and (4) Our Hearts.

A. Will: First we must turn our will up to the highest setting. This is what is needed. If we do not have determination and make up our minds to do it, nothing will happen. We must be apostles, not just do apostolic things, we must be Christians, not just do Christian things.

B. Prayer: Our Knees – Prayer is the "password" of the apostle. They have been called the "levers of the Apostles." We use our knees in prayer. This helps us put our actions in the right order; first we talk to God about our friends then we talk to our friends about God. All successful apostolic undertakings have at their core, prayer. Our strength and conviction will come from this. Without Grace, our efforts will go nowhere. Without Christ in our lives, how could we possibly think about introducing Him to others? We must go into our surroundings with Him, hand in hand.

C. Mind: It is necessary that we use our God given minds and apply our intelligence fully, just as we do in our jobs or businesses ("be as meek as a lamb and clever as a fox," just think how resourceful we can be when we really want something) but, it is done in collaboration with Christ and He makes up for our limitations.

D. Heart: We are called to be all things to people in order to gain them for Christ; but people will quickly see the inauthentic, the insincere. Show charity, gentleness and respect when dealing with people. Often, the best Saints come from the "roughest of diamonds," the marginalized, those now distant from God. Marvelous things can happen when we go with God and don't worry about whether or not we have a parachute on.

(2) The Second Front – The Others:

NOTE: The purpose of the reconnaissance flight is to give the Cursillistas some view of the kinds of people they will encounter in the situations they are in. It is a study of individuals, that is, of types of people, not of trends or institutions. It only treats people
from the religious point of view. Therefore, this is a section on which the most local adaptation can be done without distorting the approach and message of the Cursillo®. This adaptation may only be done in conjunction with the local Secretariat and the School of Leaders, leaving a very small margin for the team members and the rollista. They can contribute suggestions on the types that exist in their environment and can gauge the effect of the treatment given in the rollo. Please see more about this on the notes about "Method of Preparing the Rollo".

*An Overview:*

Let's examine the "others" by taking reconnaissance flight over what is out there and see if we can recognize some of the various types of people and the various groups they might fit into. We might even recognize ourselves in these different classifications for the environments can be a mirror, reflecting back to us what we are, or what we were, or are becoming.

Here we should do the same thing a "Coach" of a team does in a "tournament" of any sport. In a "tournament" there are various teams with varieties of players with different talents and personalities. Each team in the "tournament" has its own characteristics, and one must know them all. The team and its players not only should practice to be physically and tactically prepared (our will, our knees, our mind and our heart) for the "tournament" or a specific "game" (as we saw in the first front), but should also study their opponent (forces of evil and all the things that militate against men living a life with Christ). First, they identify which are the strengths of the different teams, its "star" players, their moves, etc.; they try to anticipate the different tactics (plays) which may be executed by their opponent, etc... After they have studied all that, they would form a plan to counter attack.

Regardless of the means employed, the persons will seem all equal at first, but once studied and known, we find that they are different inside; as the keys of a piano, on the surface they all seem equal, but each one has a distinct note. We will find some Saints out there, and from there we will see a descending scale of less and less holiness, to those totally separated from God, and even atheists.

**A. First Group: Believe in God, they love God, they want to "do good".**

- **Authentic:** They think and act as Catholics, they practice their faith 24 hours a day, they are apostles and it shows in how they live their lives, they are longed for on our Weekends, they are the Leaders that were talked about in the Leaders rollo last night.
  - **Quiet ones:** They think as Christians but they love their easy chairs, they admire those with faith but they are prone to just thinking about it.
  - **Lovers of Practices:** Hover around the Church, altar kissers, "experts", sanctimonious, lack a balanced approach, attached to strange forms.
  - **Honest:** "respectable Catholics", that is what they call themselves, and they are normally honest about their faith except when they stop being so. They have good will but are lax in discipline, they are less than they could be.

**Common Denominator:** They try to be Catholics always.

**B. Second Group: Believe in God, they love God, they want to "feel good"**
• Need to be nudged: Limited self motivation, need to be nudged by someone to wake them up, be it a family member, friend, priest, teacher, boss, but they soon go back to sleep.
• Spouse/Associate: Do religious practices only by interest; the sweetheart of, the husband of; once they conquer what they proposed, they go on with their old "good" life.
  • When it thunders: Some disaster, the noise wakes them up.
  • Impossible situations: Nowhere else to turn, desperate, needs to be pulled out of a situation.
  • For own convenience: Self serving, when it suits them: "if you do this for me, I'll do this for you. "Remember God, this week I put some extra money on the collection!"
  • Through irony: They sympathize with Catholic criterion, say one thing, but do something else.
  • Through vanity: Mass is a social event, what's more important for them is the way the "temple" is decorated; they attend to be seen, socially beneficial.
  • In theory: They are Catholic if they can be and if they can't they are not and are sorry for it.
  • With medals and symbols: They have only the "trade mark", if they lose their medal, they feel nervous, unsafe.
  • By association: Friends of the priest, pay their dues so they can take part in the processions.

Common Denominator: They try, at times, to be Catholic.

C. Third Group: Believe in God but nothing more.
• Stiff necked: The snobs, try to please those that rank above and ignore those below.
• A thick skin: They miss Mass and don't even notice it.
• A dirty mouth: They gossip and tell crude jokes.
• Wear dark glasses: They don't see reality; they think they know it all.

Common Denominator: They are Catholics at random.

D. Fourth Group: Do not believe because they do not know God.

We must pay special attention to this group during our apostolic action, as some of the best leaders have come from them. Most of the people in this group are not Christians, because no one has communicated to them what Christianity is. But when confronted with the realities and possible dimensions of the Gospel, they totally surrender to it.

They are far away from God. They do not want to know because they never heard of God as He really is. No one ever introduced God to them in a proper way.
• The indifferent: The uninterested ones; they made their first communion, and considering themselves "preachers of the law", have not come back since.
• The misguided: Slaves of the secular world (materialism, pleasure, drugs, alcohol, etc.) their lives are not orderly, but sinful.
The egocentric: Make their own religion through ignorance, comfort, convenience, lax conscience. They do not know what God wants.

The semi-atheist: Say they believe in God but not in the priests or the Church.
Common Denominator: Do not believe in God because of ignorance of Him.

E. Fifth Group: Do not believe in God because He does not exist.

- Practicing atheists: They say there is no God and are often deeply convinced of this (mistakenly, we think). Religion is the last of their priorities.
- Intellectual atheists: They are the most dangerous ones, because they make use of their intelligence to kill the idea of God in the mind of the believers.

Common Denominator: There is no God.

How to approach the "others":

We have just finished surveying the types of people of our second battlefront: the "others". We now have a better idea of the terrain concerning the general environment. You might even have identified some people (family, neighbors, co-workers, etc.) from your daily situation whom you want draw to Christ. Let us now take a close look at the approach we should take.

In the first front, we approach "ourselves" first through our will, then prayer, mind, and lastly, the heart. In the second front, in approaching the "others", we basically use the reverse sequence, first the heart, then the mind, will, and then lastly, introducing them to prayer.

A. Heart: If we do not reach and influence the heart first, not much will happen. We must approach them like Christ did... (Wedding in Cana, Jn. 2:1-11). The result of this charitable act was that disciples came to believe in Him. A genuine act of charity drew men to Christ. Our relationship ought to be authentic; it must be based on true charity and understanding.

B. Mind: From the heart, go to the mind. This is not as difficult as it first seems, because we are dealing with Christians who have the seeds of Grace that was planted in us at our Baptism. Men and women are waiting to hear about Christ, baptized and non-baptized.

C. Will: We must "magnetize", bring our companions along with us, and then invite them to follow Christ. Our friends must make their own conscious decision to follow Christ. No matter who they may be, we cannot, and should not force or attempt to manipulate this decision. All we can do is invite them to follow Christ, and the life He offers. Christ did it that way, "Whoever wants to follow me..."

D. Prayer: Once we have conquered their Heart, Mind and Will, with the Grace from the Father, they will fall on their knees.

(3) The Third Front (The Environment):

The third "front" is the consequence of beginning the process with “ourselves” first and the "others" second. If the environment is the sum of ideas, persons, and circumstances that occur in a specific time and place when people get together; the only thing missing then is Christ. If environment is the result of people working together, playing together,
getting together with family, neighbors, friends, etc., not only do we have to work with the individual person, but also work the situation as a whole. We need to penetrate the situation as a whole and change its tone and direction so that when these people are together, they will be leading one another to Christ.

Everyone who takes the Gospel seriously and are authentic about it will face the problem of having to overcome the obstacles, the prejudices, and the preconceived ideas, that hinder spiritual growth and the Christian vision.

Even when we are surrounded by seemingly impossible situations and there seems to be no way out, we need to reflect and work out a plan. When the engineers are building a railroad track, for example, and they find mountains covering their path, they make a tunnel. They draw a plan on how to make the tunnel and problem solved. If we do something similar when we are confronted with those mountains on our way, if we persevere in following the right path; we will find the solution to overcome the difficulties. This is how Grace works in our lives.

5. CONCLUSION

Before coming to the Cursillo®, each of our lives was made up of one or more groups of people who coexisted together and held similar ideas, likes and dislikes, and experienced a common restlessness. When we return to our environments, nothing will have changed. In order for us to communicate in a new way with those in our surroundings, we will have to seek and find the way to help those who have wandered away from God: Helping others to find their way back to the Father is what Cursillo® is about. It is not to make it easier for us. It is to make it easier for the others. Cursillo® is about making it easier for those who have wandered away to come back to the Father.