

STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Source: National Cursillo Center Mailing – June 2006

The study of environments is the first rollo of the third day. In this phase of the Cursillo we give attention to the different areas where a person's activity should develop, so that they may be the ferment of a better world. The actions of a Christian are always carried out with the circumstances, the time, and place that the person already occupies. In other words, where the person finds himself at that precise time and place. 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.

After the morning meditation on the Message of Christ to the Cursillista, 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 to their surroundings. This rollo invites and encourages us to transform our environments, stressing that we are not to detest and run from the world, but are called to bring a Christian influence to that world.

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

The Study of the Environment rollo helps to explain the definition of environment and increases our understanding of its influence in one's life. Also, it explains how to influence our environments in order to make a difference.

Definition of Environment - The environment is the "combination of ideas and circumstances which are sustained by the persons who surround us". The environment is the result of people gathering together (working together, playing together, talking together). It is what results from their interaction. Therefore, the apostle has to think about more than the individual persons. He has to think about the situation which results from their interaction. Not only does he have to work with the individual persons, he also has to work on the situation as a whole.

This rollo proposes a practical method to win the environment (person) and bring them to Christ. There are three steps in the process that we have to concentrate on.

- First; ourselves (strengthen and convince ourselves that Christ is the answer).
- Second; others (acquaintances, associates, casual friends) and the process of getting to know them, treating them with dignity, respect and as persons.
- Third; the environment (those who surround us where we exist)

The first step – Approaching Ourselves - the effectiveness in the leavening of the environment is based on the depth of relationship each one has with oneself. First is our WILL, we must want to place our will to the highest degree in order to move from “I can” to “I will”. Second is PRAYER, all our apostolic undertakings should have at their core, prayer. Our strength comes from this. Third is our MIND, it is necessary to use our God given mind and apply our intelligence in our evangelization efforts just as we do for everything else we do. And Fourth is HEART, our heart must be open to be all things to people in order to win them for Christ.

The second step – Approaching Others - the relationships with those who accompany us in life: family, neighbors, and friends. In this step, we basically use the reverse sequence as applied above to Ourselves. First, we must win the person’s heart, second their mind, third their will and lastly, introduce them to prayer. If we do not reach and influence the heart first, not much will happen. From the heart, then it moves to the mind. This is not as difficult as it may seem because as Christians, we have the seed of Grace that was planted in us at our Baptism. We must win the person’s will in order to bring our companions along with us. And lastly, Grace from the Father will lead the person to prayer.

The third step – the Environment – the relationships with those who surround us with their circumstances in a certain time and place. This step is a natural 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.

This rollo helps the Cursillista understand that even before the Cursillo, their lives were made up of one or more groups of people who coexisted together and held similar ideas, likes and dislikes, and experienced a common restlessness and that when they return from the Weekend, nothing will have changed in their environments. The consequence of the Cursillistas’ response to Christ will be a natural reaching out to the person(s) to introduce them to Christ through a personal witness of living what is fundamental for being Christian.