My name is Bill Wells, from St. Paul Parish

and I sat at the table of St. John Vianney on my Cursillo weekend in 2016.

Please stand

Please turn to page 129 of your Pilgrim’s guide and pray for the Holy Spirit.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

“Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.”

Please sit

In 2010, we were planning our move from Eden Prairie, MN to Greensboro, Mary and I begin to take stock from our lives and realized that we really didn’t have true friendships. We had friends at Church, in the Soccer organization and Scouts however didn’t really have anyone that we could call “true friends.” One of our goals as we come down here along with the kids getting older is to start making true friends.

In 2016, both of my parents passed away within a short time of each other unexpectedly and truly they were each other best friends. My dad was the last to pass so it fell on me to make the phone calls informing people of his death. I was stunned that parents had no close friends, only transactional type of friends. In fact, their closest “friends” never returned my phone calls nor wished condolences.

I was raised in the Midwest with the mentality of your personal life was well personal and you didn’t discuss feelings/emotions or issues with other people. In fact my Dad had a stroke and we didn’t know for a week.

It become apparent I really didn’t know what friendship was….

**In this technique talk, I will cover everything you want to know about friendship and were afraid to ask. I will borrow liberally from the National Cursillo website along with a book True Friendship by John Cuddeback.**

The 1st question is what a friend is - Friends are people we want to be with; they are those whom we care for and who care for us. Indeed, at times we speak with great confidence about “true friendship” and how wonderful it is. To be honest with myself, I was probably was not the best friend in the world a few years ago. Even with the Dale Carnegie course, people were a means to an end.

In the book True Friendship and even within the movement, the first step to friendship is to lead a virtuous life

According to Dr. John Cuddeback, true friendship leading to happiness is for those who live a certain kind of life, namely a virtuous life. We cannot have true friendships if we are not virtuous. In our society, the majority of people think they know what friendship is and that they have it, and thus friendship is normally valued. Whereas, very few people claim that they know what virtue is, or that they practice it. The lack of virtue in our society, therefore, does not seem to bother them. But to have friendship in the absence of virtue is self-defeating. Dr. Cuddeback quoted St. John’s first letter to prove his point, “If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live truth” (1 John 1:6). True friendship and virtue are inseparable; together they are the key to human happiness.

Virtuous persons are those who, through a desire to do what is good and right, have disciplined themselves and consistently direct their appetites or desires. For a Christian, the life of virtue is raised to a larger context—that of serving and being transformed in the Lord.

Living a virtuous life requires much more than just knowing what is most important. Virtues are all about living out the truth that you know.

Regarding the wisdom of the ancients on friendship, Dr. John Cuddeback states that Aristotle has considered friendship as “a virtue or it implies virtue, and friendship is besides most necessary with a view to living. For without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods ….. ” (Nicomachean Ethics, 1155a1-3). Therefore, Aristotle has made clear that living in true friendship is to live the good life, to be happy. And in his book, Dr. Cuddeback tries to help us understand how being virtuous and being a true friend are necessarily connected with each other, or practically the same thing. For example, an employer always pays his employees a living wage, even when he could get away with giving less.

Friendship, like great music, is a masterpiece; it happens because persons know what they want and thus develop the “skills”—especially the virtues—necessary to achieve their great goal.

Now that we have laid the groundwork for how to be a good friend by leading a virtuous life, what are types of friendships

Aristotle distinguishes three objects of affection or love: the pleasant, the useful, and the honorable good or the virtuous good. Each of these can be the “good” that is mutually willed in a friendship, so there are three kinds of friendship that correspond to these three goods. We can call them the “pleasant friendship”, the “useful friendship”, and the “virtuous friendship”.

Let us note from the start that these are not mutually exclusive kinds; they are basic types. As we proceed, we will see how helpful it is to distinguish these types.

In the pleasant friendship, two people find each other’s company to be pleasant. This friendship is basically about having a good time together. What each sees and values in the other is that the other is the cause of some pleasure for himself. “Pleasure” here refers especially to the level of what appeals to the senses. This friendship is particularly found among young people. Since young people tend to focus more on pleasure, they tend to develop relationships based on it. A good example of this is two college students who have a friendship primarily because they socialize together.

In the useful friendship, each person receives some benefit from the presence or actions of the other, and this is the basis for the relationship. Many business relationships are useful friendships when each person, as a matter of course, provides for the needs of the other.

The third type of friendship is the virtuous friendship

The best way to introduce the virtuous friendship is to stop and consider what is shared by the first two kinds. The most important shared characteristic is, in fact, what is not there, what is absent. In the pleasant friendship and the useful friendship, the love or goodwill between the friends that grounds the relationship is neither (a) for the other’s sake nor (b) because of who the other is in himself.

Does this mean that the first two kinds of friendship are bad and should be avoided? The answer is a definite no. These kinds of friendship are natural, and they have their place in everyone’s life. What is very important, however, is to recognize these for what they are, and what they are not. We also need to learn to live them well. Even though a relationship is not based on a love of the other for who he is, this friendship can still be lived with respect and integrity. When Aristotle calls them “incidental friendships”, he means that they are not friendships in the full and most important sense. They can be called friendships because in a limited way they fit the general definition above, but they fall short of what full or true friendship is all about. Making this distinction is a big step toward understanding the most important kind of friendship.

Here is the flip side of what was said about the first two kinds of friendship. In a virtuous friendship, the friends each love the other (a) for the other’s sake and (b) because of who the other is in himself—that is, not because of something incidental to him.

Friendship is a journey, which must evolve naturally. There is no timetable for friendship – it may take years to “bear fruit”

Eduardo and his friends must have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, known as their Foundational Charism, to think of friendship as one of their fundamental ideas or factors that constitute or form the Cursillo Movement with its mission to become living witnesses to Christ in the environments. According to Dr. John Cuddeback, since in friendship persons are united in their love of one another and in their love of virtue, friends share a vision of the good life and strive to achieve it. Friendships thus provide “mini-communities” within the larger community; they are a basic unit of striving for perfection.

The method of Cursillo, the path it follows to achieve its purpose, is the friendship between people. The method consists in making friends, being friends, and making those friends, friends of Christ. Cursillo seeks an effective approach to reach the person, especially men and women who believe they have no faith in Jesus Christ or who don’t know if they have faith.

Precursillo corresponds to the sphere of our environment or of others. Precursillo involves a process of selection and preparation with the holy intention that the labor will produce a good and bountiful harvest. A good and abundant harvest depends, first of all, on God’s plans and the freedom of the person. But the work of the sower is of crucial importance. The sower has to prepare the ground and take care of the seed. The seed will produce fruit if it falls on fertile ground

In the Gospel of John, we read about Philip introducing his friend Nathanael to Jesus. The apostle Philip, having been invited by Jesus to friendship and discipleship (John 1:43) and aware of his friend Nathanael’s expectation of the Messiah, excitedly declared, “We have found the one Moses spoke of . . .” (John 1:45). In response to Nathanael’s reaction, the undeterred Philip invites him to “Come and see” (John 1:46). Jesus’ invitation to friendship and discipleship was gaining momentum. Jesus loved them as they were, but called them, through friendship to be more! Jesus’ communion with the Father was bearing fruit as he “studies his environment”, his “moveable square meter” in selecting, calling, and preparing his “candidates”. He then empowered them (and us) to do likewise.

The Precursillo should not be the proclamation of the Good News as a theory. The objective of the Precursillo is not to “take” someone to a Cursillo, but to bring someone to "know" Jesus Christ.

In my environment, my focus is always to bring men to Christ not Cursillo. In many cases, they start grouping, coming to Bible study and getting active within the Knights before mentioning Cursillo.

The most important thing to understand is that our friendship with Jesus must be visible in our friendship with others. It is this kind of friendship that has the creative power necessary to transform the world as Christian men and women acting as leaven in their environments.

The second phase of friendship in the Cursillo movement is the weekend.

“The Cursillo Weekend is above all a living experience of what is fundamental for being a Christian” (Structure of Ideas). The friendship and love of God in Jesus Christ is the center of what is fundamental for being Christian and, in the Cursillo Weekend, friendship continues to be the best method to transmit His friendship and love to all the new Cursillistas.

The 1st friendship on the Cursillo weekend is within the team. In the selection of the team, true friendship is a criterion that is used. And if true friendship exists, we will already know the people that we select.

As the Rector for the upcoming weekend, I have been blessed for so many guys to say “yes” however many of those relationships were built up in living or working previous weekend as friends so the phone calls were easy.

We cannot forget that the team members are not the ones that initiate the candidate’s conversion; they are only the instruments in the hands of the Lord. The team members should also be aware of their talents, possibilities and limitations, so that in true friendship, they will help one another during team

This unconditional friendship continues in the Cursillo Weekend phase from the first moment when the team members meet the candidates. Through this unconditional friendship process in the Cursillo Weekend phase and with the grace of God, the candidates, motivated by so many prayers and sacrifices, are shown the possibility to live a different life, to find their value as persons, to find the love and friendship of God in Jesus Christ and to discover the other brothers and sisters who are also trying to live and share what is fundamental to being a Christian. And in so doing, they form the new mentality that will help them obtain a new and more powerful meaning to their life.. Finally, but with the same level of importance, the friendship of the Team members with the new Cursillistas after the Cursillo Weekend should continue after the Cursillo Weekend. All the new Cursillistas need to confirm that, in their Fourth Day everything they have been told and experienced since their first encounter in the Precursillo phase must be true, and that the Cursillo team members are living what is fundamental to being Christian just as they proclaimed during the Weekend

The Postcursillo is the third phase in the Cursillo Movement, and the key to making the triple encounter discovered in the Cursillo, a continuous and progressive reality. The purpose of the Postcursillo is to see Christ in every moment.

The Method of Cursillos is based on this relationship of friendship in order to bring to life the essence and purpose of its Charism. The Group Reunion, for this purpose and this motivation, becomes the nerve of the Postcursillo. In Cursillo, the group does not gather to do, but to be.

The aim and purpose of the Group is nothing more, but also nothing less, than to allow the friends who comprise the Group, to relive or share together, on a weekly basis, what they have each lived separately in their own environments throughout the week. The intent is not that they live together but simply share what is being lived.

I have been in two groups since I lived my weekend in 2016. When parents passed away in 2016, I was really lost and had nothing in terms of faith. My group was there to listen and support my time in the desert. The second group has now grow to 13 (I know a bit large) with a steady 7 or so however the group is based on friendship and doesn’t want to break up so we invest in the time in friendship pushing each other to get closer to Christ.

The Ultreya is the gathering of the Groups or the Reunion of the Group Reunions. The purpose of the Ultreya is to encourage living the faith, facilitating that the best of each person reaches the most people possible, through friendship and personal testimonies, so that each person feels loved, understood, supported and appreciated as a person. The Ultreya is the moment in which life enters the Ultreya and the moment the Ultreya enters into life, removing fears from those who might have them and bringing forth understanding and confidence to live in Grace and bear witness to the Love of God in the environments in which we move, in the moveable square meter in which each of us lives.

Conclusion

Since we have moved to Greensboro in 2010, we have shared our challenges with our youngest daughter mental illness with our small group and realized many people have shared the same challenges. We have become part of the Cursillo movement even through it took 4 years walking with my Sponsor before making the weekend. I have made many virtuous friendships in/out of the movement include Pam who pray over me.

In conclusion, turning to page 5 of the Pilgrim Guide to be on a pilgrimage is to journey to the Father through Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit with the help of Mary and all the Saints as you bring your brothers and sisters along with you.

De Colores!