

Biography:

Born and raised in the Philippines, 5th to the eldest of 6 children. Completed college degree in Commerce major in Accounting. Migrated to the United States in Nov 1969. Worked for public and private sectors. Lived in Daly City for over 40 years and served in different ministries:

- 1) Lector and Eucharistic Minister at St. Andrew Parish
- 2) Served in Cursillo weekends in different capacities
- 3) Belong to a permanent Group Reunion for 40+ years
- 4) Became Rectora in 1999;
- 5) Servant Leader in the Secretariat as Treasurer for 3 terms (9 years)
- 6) Professed Carmelite Third Order in Dec 2014

Retired in Aug 2013 and moved to Tracy, CA and continued to serve as Lector and Eucharistic Minister at St. Bernard Parish. Also joined the Couples for Christ in May 2015 and became Household Head Leaders the following year.

Married to Bro. Tony and celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary last May 2020. Have 2 grown children: Ruby and Mark; 4 granddaughters and 1 great grandson.

Her immediate family: parents, 5 siblings and her husband are all Cursillistas.

Introduction:

I am your sister cursillista in Christ - Sis. Beth Valderama.

I started living my cursillo 42 years ago at St. Benedict Center in San Francisco, Cursillo No. 388 Decuria St. Rita. My decision to attend the cursillo weekend was an awakening and a turning point in my faith response to serve God

1) What is Palanca?

Palanca is a term used in the Cursillo which means intercessory prayers, sacrifices or works of mercy. They are offered on behalf of another person or something. The ACTUAL prayers and sacrifices are the real power behind the Palanca.

Palancas may be performed in many ways. Through prayers, we are encouraged to do Palanca constantly in the form of morning offerings, personal prayer periods, Masses, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Rosaries, Stations of the Cross, Spiritual meditations. Sacrifices can come in the form of fasting, self denial or giving up of something, doing a kind act that only you and God know about it. Works of mercy can best be performed by either giving alms, working in the food pantry or visiting the sick,

It is important to understand that a letter may be sent explaining what type of Palanca is being offered but the letter is NOT the Palanca. The actual Palanca is the ACTION (Prayer, Sacrifice or Works or Mercy) and can be done without writing a letter about it. These letters and/or small gifts such as books and flowers

which are given during a Cursillo weekend are "evidences of Palanca" to show that someone has been praying for the cursillistas before, during and even beyond the Cursillo weekend.

2) What is the purpose of Palanca? Why is it important?

Palancas are sent to the participants...why?...to let them know that so many people whom they do not even know personally are praying and making sacrifices for them solely for the success of their weekend and to encourage them in their spiritual journey. The idea is that we petition God to send His grace upon the candidates and team for an encounter with Him. Palanca is a useful tool to lift up our praying hearts to God.

3) Are there different types of Palancas?

1) Personal Palanca

This Palanca is performed on behalf of individual candidates and team members. It is most frequently demonstrated in personal letters that are not meant for anyone but the recipient. A brief note of encouragement is written giving reassurance that God will meet the candidate right where he/she is. It is good to add a Scripture passage. Let them know you are praying for them and actually do it.

2) General Palanca

This is Palanca performed on the weekend in general. It is most frequently demonstrated in short-written letters or posters that are addressed to the candidates and team members on a particular weekend. It should include the actual Palanca that you will be providing to the weekend such as:

- a) Let them know that you will be praying for them. Perhaps you will pray for the weekend every time you have to stop at a red light or something like that and you should be sure to honor your commitment.
- b) Perhaps you made something that you are giving to the weekend. Let them know the spiritual significance of the item.
- c) Try to include an encouraging scripture passage. Using the theme scripture of the weekend helps to promote the unity of the weekend.
- d) Posters with brief notes signed by individuals in your Group Reunion or Ultreya are an excellent form of General Palanca.

I remember I used to prepare a big poster and ask the members of my own Group Reunion to write their palanca. Then the poster is presented to the candidates during the talk on Faith.

I also remember doing the same big poster and went for a parish-based palanca. This time, I had ask some parishioners of St. Andrew to write their palanca for candidates whom they know and whom I was sponsoring. I have since sponsored 2 graduates: Sis. Luz and Sis. Sabina and both are actively serving the Cursillo Movement as Servant Leaders of the Secretariat.

3) Service Palanca.

This Palanca is service performed before or during the cursillo weekend often

done behind the scenes and without specific recognition. It is most frequently considered to be a physical effort.

The best example I can think of is the unselfish commitment and love of our very own Bro. Jun Mansalay and other cursillistas who time and again tirelessly set up the PA system, provide music, help set up, help cleanup after closing, drive someone to a weekend and back, run errands and other cursillo related tasks. They work behind the scene quietly and dedicated their lives for love of the cursillo. This type of palanca is pleasing to the Lord who looks at the interior disposition of the hearts.

4) What was the origin of Palancas?

Every Cursillistas, after returning from their weekend knows what Palanca means. It is a Spanish word, literally meaning "a lever." A lever is normally used to move something which one could not move by normal strength. The lever is seen as what we might call in our own culture as a "seesaw", where a group of individuals gather at one end to lift up another individual or group higher than themselves. The visual idea of individuals getting on one end of the seesaw so that their weight carries them down to the ground to lift others up is the way to express that Paschal Mystery all Christians are called to experience in their spiritual lives.

Palanca is then a tool that we use to help us achieve something not possible without the grace of God. As Jesus states in the Gospel of John, "without Him, we can do nothing." Palanca in the context of the Cursillo is the same. All of our efforts to bring others to Christ can be of no avail without the prayers, sacrifices and works of mercy that are done with the help of the Holy Spirit which brings us the grace we need to serve God.

5) How is Palanca relevant to Cursillistas?

The Cursillo Movement assures us that Palanca or prayer has always been the strength of all the functions of the Movement. The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement strongly recognizes grace as principle and foundation of our Movement and considers Palanca as one of the basic elements of the Cursillo Strategy known as the Mystery of the Palanca. It is indispensable as the first and the most basic step underlying all other human efforts - to count on the help of grace from God with the all-powerful strength of prayer that is humble, confident and unceasing. It is urgent to remember that without Him, we are nothing, we are worth nothing, we can do nothing, We must reaffirm the primacy that the Cursillo strategy has always given, as its most important characteristics, to Palanca. Dependence on this has to be real, sincere and permanent, individual and communal to guarantee the efficacy of any other steps one takes. Prayers and sacrifices on behalf of the Cursillo which we call Palanca are crucial to its spiritual success.

6) How is Palanca applicable to Pre, Proper and Post Cursillo?

PreCursillo:

Prayer has always been the strength of the Cursillo. Just as grace is an absolute necessity in the re-Christianization of the world, no Cursillo should be prepared or

carried out without the appropriate spiritual support.

Palanca should never be seen as a tool to assist ONLY the candidates. Instead, Palanca should be used as a tool to assist the Cursillo Movement and hence the Church. For this reason, Palanca should be an essential part of the PreCursillo. We should keep in mind the importance of the prayers and sacrifices in the selection process, for the Sponsors who are in the process of preparing candidates and for the possible candidate themselves so that nothing interferes with their plans to attend the Cursillo Weekend.

Cursillo Proper:

During the 3-day Cursillo weekend, the role of the outside community is passive and distant except for its Palanca. Historically, during this period, Palanca has been seen as intense prayer and personal sacrifice offered by the community and outside leaders. Palanca is crucial for the spiritual success of the Cursillo. The three days are supernaturally backed by the communities who pray and make sacrifices for their brothers and sisters so as to impart truth and grace to them. Their spiritual presence should be communicated to the Cursillistas and should be made apparent that it is normal for Christians to pray and sacrifice for others. Though they don't know them personally, these Christians know from their own experience the effect of their attitude on the conversion process. Such communities are a witness to the possibility of being Christian in any part of the world and that God continues making Himself present in the world through groups of persons who live the Gospel and give themselves for the Christianization of the world. Palanca shows the ecclesial community as a community mindful of the salvation of the group making the weekend and as a community that feels committed to this group. They are a reflection of Christ, the Savior in the community.

For the 3-day weekend, Palanca should be offered for the candidates so that they will be open to the grace of God on the weekend. Palanca should also be offered for the team so that the team members are formed into a real Christian community. The emphasis should be on the Palanca in general with the outside community offering prayer and sacrifice for the community that is living the Cursillo experience. Personal Palanca letters should be limited to an immediate family member, a relative or a sponsor.

Post Cursillo:

In the past, upon finishing the Cursillo Weekend, the Palanca also ended. After a thorough understanding of the conversion process, it became obvious that Palanca is needed even more during the PostCursillo. The newly converted Cursillistas are going to be leaving this cloistered atmosphere which was centered in Christ. They will be returning to their own environments. They will be returning to the daily pressures and concerns. In other words, they need our prayers, sacrifices, love and support all the more now than they did during the weekend.

In addition, Palanca should be offered on an ongoing basis for Group Reunions Ultreyas, School of Leaders and workshops. It should be offered for all Secretariat (local and national) so that the members may be guided and

directed by the Holy Spirit.

The single most important thing anyone can do is pray. The Holy Spirit changes hearts and your prayers invoke the Holy Spirit to act.

De Colores!