

On School of Leaders (SOL) - Sis Sabina Gotuaco

September 12, 2020

2 pm to 4 pm – Via Zoom

Introduction:

Hello, my name is Sis Sabina and I made my Cursillo Group #764 in June 2011 @ Holy Redeemers in Oakland. My rectora was Sis Mila Ramirez. My sponsors were Sisters Luz Chin and Beth Valderama. I belonged to the Decuria of St. Therese of Liseaux or the Child Jesus.

My memories of the Cursillo weekend were grace-filled moments with God. The reason for my volunteering in Cursillo today is to allow others the chance of experiencing God's grace and love too. And hopefully, those who attend and become Cursillistas will "pay it forward," be church leaders, and become an active part of our joyful and loving Cursillista community.

Brief Biography:

I am still working full time and cannot retire yet as I still have bills to pay and lots of volunteer organizations to donate. I worked for both profit and nonprofit sectors. For the past 25 years though, I have been working in the nonprofit sectors - specifically 501c3 organizations. These organizations were from religious, schools and educational sectors.

I currently work for the Pacific Pension & Investment Institute (an educational organization) as their Director of Finance & Administration. I am a parishioner of St. Augustine church in South San Francisco and am involved as a reader and an extraordinary minister. I also participate in the faith sharing group and am a finance council member. My other religious associations also include being an affiliate of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. I was also a graduate catechist of the Mother of Life center in Novaliches, Quezon City many years ago. Today, I still keep in touch with these organizations.

Secretariat:

I answered God's call to be on the Secretariat team as the School of Leaders chair effective August 15, 2020. I was commissioned on August 22, 2020 (three weeks ago), together with my other team secretariat members at St. Augustine church. I attended the National Cursillo gathering virtually in early August and heard regional secretariat members expressing their regrets that their terms were up. I remember them years ago expressing their excitement to join and saying "yes" right away and I felt really guilty because I have declined over the years to be part of the secretariat due to concerns about my time commitments.

Another guilty confession - It also took me a few years before I said yes to attending the three-day weekend. Fast forward to today, it is never too late to be called by God. I am today a "Servant of the Lord!" My personal acronym for SOL. Just like Mother Mary's fiat – "Be it done unto me according to your word."

Presentation

1. What is the School of Leaders?

- They are the SF Filipino Cursillo leaders who have chosen the Cursillo as their primary apostolic vocation in the Archdiocese of San Francisco.
- The SOL is a spiritual and physical (virtual) gathering of the leaders of the San Francisco Filipino Cursillo Movement.
- The School of Leaders is run by the Secretariat, and the Secretariat is appointed from the School of Leaders. In short, we/the secretariat work as a team.
- The Secretariat ensures that the School of Leaders is
 - a school of Holiness,
 - a school of Community, and
 - a school of Formation.

2. What are the purposes and objectives?

- Purpose: The purpose of the School of Leaders is to promote growth and understanding of what is fundamental to being a Christian.
- Specific Objectives:
 - To develop the piety/holiness of the leaders – each one of us.
 - To strengthen the Christian love and unity of the leaders of the San Francisco Filipino Cursillo Movement.
 - To develop the understanding of the authentic Cursillo Movement—its charism (or spiritual gift or grace) and mentality; its purpose, strategy and method.
 - To make relevant our piety, study and action to the needs of the San Francisco Archdiocese, the Catholic Church as a whole, the Christian community and the world.

3. What are the roles of the Chair of the SOL?

The School of Leaders Chair shall:

- Set the program to strengthen the members of the School of Leaders in the areas of:
 - Love, Friendship and Community
- Set the program and understanding in the areas of:
 - Cursillo Charism (grace/spiritual gift), its Purpose, Strategy, and Methodology (termed: Technical Talks by Lay People)
- Set the program to bring about an understanding in the areas of:
 - Holiness, hand in hand with the spiritual leadership and direction of the Spiritual Advisor and Spiritual (doctrinal) talks by clergies, and finally
- Set the program to bring about:

- Apostolic Action.
 - The SOL chair also coordinates closely with the chairs of the three Cursillo Sections - Precursillo, Proper or the Three-day weekend and Postcursillo - in the areas of Piety, Study and Action.
4. What are our present and future plans? How do we go about accomplishing these plans?
- Current plans:
- The question is – how do we revitalize our Cursillo? We did some brainstorming, assessing, planning and formulating of relevant and engaging topics and speakers.
 - We plan to establish ad hoc committees as necessary. If you feel you are called by the Holy Spirit, please volunteer to be in our adhoc SOL group by sending an email to me by the end of the day today. Otherwise, if you have ideas on SOL, please call or email me with your ideas.
5. Going forward – what and how do we accomplish our future plans:

Before going into our future plans, we were questioning as to what exactly is our “Cursillo Special Brand?” Some people coined this brand as the “Special Sauce”. What are our core competencies? What differentiates us from other ministries out there?

- The first thing most of us think of in terms of our core competency (or what we Cursillistas are good at) would be our three-day weekend retreat. This is where most of us had our conversion, transformation, encounter, “metanoia”, or God’s grace-filled experience.
- Our Cursillo three-Day weekend is our encounter with **Self, God, and Others**. This encounter has equipped us to go and share the Gospel and be Jesus' witnesses "...to the ends of the earth..." (Acts 1:8) and "...to make disciples of all nations..." (Mt 28:19).
- We/Cursillistas are good in terms of bringing out the love of God on this weekend retreat and it is our core competency or spiritual gift in terms of carrying out this retreat successfully.
- After the weekend retreat, we follow-up with engaging our Cursillistas in Group Reunion and Ultreyas. We made a friend, became their friend and brought new brothers and sisters to Christ. Our gatherings go back to our Cursillo goals of growing in holiness, building our community and providing formation to our brothers and sisters. These Cursillo gatherings too are ways to discover what is fundamental to being a Christian.

Now that we know that our core competency is being the instrument in providing the God’s grace filled love on this three day weekend. --

6. Who would be our target audience?
- Young Adults (Millennials, Generation Y) – in their mid 20’s and thirties
 - Adults (Generation X) – 40’s to 50’s
 - Catechists

7. How do we partner with our target group?
 - Young adults – in parish activities
 - Active adults – in prayer and ministry groups in parishes
 - Active adults in Filipino ministries within the Archdiocese of SF

8. How do we make it sustainable – in programs and finance?
 - The goal is to sow and plant the seeds among younger generations so they can carry on the mission of Cursillo (when we are in heaven!)
 - What we can do is to sponsor the three-day weekend retreat for these young adults or adults by covering at least half of their retreat expense. Or for those in hardships, we could ask them to pay what they could afford.
 - We could start donating towards this subsidy for the future three-day weekend since we are saving on not traveling and not eating out during this pandemic.

9. What are our next steps?
 - Our core competency is providing the experience for the three-day weekend retreat, together with our precursillo and postcursillo.
 - Get to know the young adults and the active adults in your parish, ministries or volunteer work; Involve ourselves in their volunteer work if possible.
 - Start saving and donating towards this weekend (send donations to Sis Cora, our treasurer; by check payable to “Cursillos in Christianity”)
 - Continue to act on our motto or slogan – “Be a friend, Make a friend, and Bring your Friend to Christ (three-day weekend retreat)

Finally, people noticed how welcoming and joyful Cursillistas/we are to others. Let us keep it up! One of my daughters said to me even: “Mom, your Cursillistas seem to have unconditional love, support and fun!” Indeed we do! Let us keep up with the spirit of joy, compassion and love of God in our hearts! Let us keep our lights shining for our community and for others!

Thank you and DeColores!
Sis Sabina