

HOLY SPIRIT PRAYER

FRIENDSHIP (given by Eduardo Bonnin) This is an abbreviated version. It is so rich, it really can be 2-3 rollos! Afterall, friendship is the basis of foundation of the charism- friendship with self, Christ and others.

The Source of this Rollo is 1st Conversations of Cala Figuera : this book describes Days of reflection on the Founding Charism of the Cursillo held in Mallorca on the 50th Anniversary of the First Cursillo Weekend held in in August 1944.

The dictionary defines friendship as “affection, a pure and disinterested feeling that exists between people, stemming from mutual esteem, appreciation and empathy.” As always, the dictionary refers to the concept, to what the word means, but it is **life itself** that tells us what it really is.

Without any doubt, the wonder of life, where it can be best captured and most valued, is **inside** the person; and the quality that can give them more joy is their ability to understand, feel, and spread the joyful experience of friendship. First, we cannot forget that each friend requires a special and different approach. In a word, each friend requires “a custom-made approach”.

Secondly, the term ‘friend’ is used in the generic sense. Generically, friend is a word, which like many others, has undergone a certain inflation and the resulting devaluation. (I think of FaceBook accounts with 1000+ “friends”, really shines light on that statement))

Until recently, in linguistic and social use, there was a distinction between “acquaintances” and “friends.” The first of these words is scarcely used now because both meanings are encompassed today within the second word.

An acquaintance is a person about whom we have some knowledge, we know a few details about their lives, we occasionally talk to them and we deal with them only in a superficial manner, and nothing else. We may have a vague feeling of empathy for an acquaintance, but s/he is not felt as necessary or certain.

Speaking of friends in the singular we should, no, it is **necessary and joyfully** appropriate for Christians, to speak first about the special friend, the most unique friend, the living, approachable, and close Christ who when we have internalized Him by Grace, He lovingly makes us become aware of that which we have in common with Him. For the fact of having been conceived and created in the image of God, and of that which we still lack and need to do, to let the simple and always possible – resemblance of Him – which we have perhaps already attempted but seldom achieved – gradually become a reality... This reminded me of Bishop Elizondo's remark at the 29th National Encounter in Scranton: It would be sad if someone comes looking for Christ and finds me, but it would be glorious if someone comes looking for me and finds Christ!

He became like us to befriend us men (in a generic sense, therefore, also women). He is the prototypical paradigm of true friendship, a sort of friendship that spares no sacrifice to make it real in everyday life, He, shows us the heights to which friendship can aspire, i.e. to give one's life for the sake of the person we love... Friendship must always be, for he who offers friendship and he who accepts it, a shelter, a safe haven, a strong fortress. (Sirach 6:14-16 A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter: he that has found one has found a treasure. There is nothing so precious as a faithful friend, and no scales can measure his excellence. A faithful friend is an elixir of life; and those who fear the Lord will find him.)

When the person, by conscious and divine Grace, experiences friendship with Christ they gradually come to realize that He is truly a friend, the quintessential true friend Who truly and always loves us. Who always looks at us with enthusiasm and is listening to us with passionate interest, Who knows our intentions, and yet is constantly at our beck and call, Who rejoices in our joy.

When the friendship between two friends is ratified and strengthened by the friendship that both have with Christ, then the joy of being friends increases and they enjoy a deeper level of friendship, because the friendship forged and cultivated within the light of Christ and warmed by His grace seems to be supported and somehow secured by Him. Many words can be said about Christ as our friend, but all of them are **not just pale** but very inadequate to explain what actually is experienced when lived in conscious and alive contact with Him.

After my **bold audacity** in trying to explain the unexplainable, I must talk about friendship between friends. (my 2 cents: let's just stop for a moment and consider that- God Himself, the Creator, King, the Almighty befriends His creatures with such great inexplicable LOVE! Something we can spend the rest of our lives contemplating and gratefully praising Him for and sharing this beautiful truth with others through Cursillo, in imitation of Him) Now back to friendship between friends...

When there is a true and intimate friendship between friends, the partners in the friendship know each other inwardly, although each one has different qualities **they respect each other**, they live the ups and downs of life side by side, and what they cannot experience together they can relive together when they meet to discuss and talk about the things each one of them has lived individually. They understand each

other with a word, a gesture, with a look, because every smile proclaims closeness and every gesture defines friendship.

Friendship is the best channel to approach and to understand a person; It is the most profound form of coexistence and it turns coexistence into a feast. Friendship makes it possible for friends to talk as equals, without having to use annoying “filters” to avoid misunderstandings; to be able to express what they feel deep in the intimacy of their souls, without fear of not being listened to or of not being understood when expressing their feelings and thoughts. This kind of communication brings a lightness to life, oxygenates our coexistence and makes it more interesting, more enjoyable and **delicious**.

Real friends are never possessive, they want their friend to move in freedom; unwittingly, the two friends push each other towards the best that each of them can be and to achieve that which is best for each of them.

Each of us is different and our circumstances are also often different, but still, we all have **an infertile area in the field of our soul** where the water of our personal identification **does not** reach; this infertile area is that which most gets in our way obstructing the process of gradually becoming our true self and achieving our highest fulfilment.

This infertile area where the water does not reach **can only** be irrigated by true friendship. True friendship can - consciously or unconsciously - bring suitable water where it is needed, since it is impelled by an unstoppable force similar to the force of gravity, which is always acting without any external impulse, naturally and with simplicity, to the rhythm of life itself and, like life, it has its ups and downs but is always buoyed up by the friendship. Essentially all friendship requires a mutual respect for the inner- most being, that private place in each person where they meet God in the intimacy of their being. This is the area of

mystery that exists inside each person; this place is incommunicable and cannot be translated into words, and its existence must always be confidently assumed and firmly respected. The respectful and delicate art of confidentiality involves an attentive, conscientious and thoughtful care that requires mutual attentiveness and respect. Because friendship is precisely the opening of ourselves to our friend, but this opening must always be dynamic, trusting and confident.

Friendship is one of the best ways of achieving a whole and balanced personality because it awakens, whets and gradually completes the well-being and wholeness of the person.

(side note) At the National Encounter in Ohio in 2012, Dr John Cuddeback gave a remarkable presentation on “Being Present with those We Love”. In that talk, Dr John said somethings that helped me understand the depth of friendship. He said it is in true friendship that we most of all learn to see ourselves, and to love ourselves. Friends, more than anyone else, can see us for who we are. St Thomas says- where there is love, there is vision. If we are failing to love, then we are also failing to see. True friends help one another grow in virtue, they support us on the journey. We should be convinced : without the sustained help of true friends, we will not become the persons we can and should be.

Back to Eduardo....

Climate of Friendship

It is quite apparent that we have not invented friendship, because it existed long before the beginning of Cursillo, but it is also true that the essence of what Cursillo is and aims at can only be grasped, understood, comprehended and spread in an atmosphere of deep and

true friendship. It is painful that many men / women seek to learn **by studying** that which can only be understood **by loving**.

The friendly acceptance of oneself is the first step for each one to wake up to their own reality, so that each one awakens to his/her true self. First, realizing their own strengths and, second, not forgetting their limitations and difficulties, so that they can make the most of the first and make them bear fruit, and second, to try and accept the latter and overcome them.

To accept oneself **as one is**, does not mean for anybody to remain in the same situation where s/he is now, because the dynamism of the wish of always wanting to improve is part of what shapes and forms the basis of a person.

When the person lives consciously and remains in touch with their life, he feels the urgent need to give it meaning. The genuinely Christian attitude is not to live with the idea that we'll be brought to account for our life, but to live fully aware of life, that is to live with enthusiasm and live fully and meaningfully, because we know very well that what we live and how we live, besides balancing and focusing our personal life, will always be to the benefit of our environment, facilitating its expansion and infecting it with our way of living.

Obviously, when there is a collective spirit of friendship that fosters it, and it is aimed, clarified and energized by the personal experience of the Christ whom we really live, or whom we really yearn to live, or whom we really regret not living, the atmosphere that emerges and gradually develops, drives us to wanting to achieve a deeper understanding of people, so as not to miss the fascinating adventure of getting to know them as they really are, and to be able to admire them in their determined efforts to progress.

The Process of Friendship

Friendship nearly always crystallizes through a more or less long gradual process. It's not often that something like "love at first sight" occurs. Although it does have its particular starting point, friendship is always the expansion in time and space of the first impression received; the echo that the warmth, the sharpness or the kindness sensed in or manifested by the other, has made on us.

The Encounter

To discover in other people some specific qualities that resemble your own or, on the contrary, to discover and admire in someone qualities that you don't have, is usually something that is conducive to friendship. That's why, sometimes, spontaneous and sincere friendship arises between people of widely divergent characters, but who gradually discover with joyful amazement that they complement each other and, conversely, there are similarities that seem to attract one another, and those who have them always enjoy talking to each other, never getting tired of their conversation, for the pleasure such a thing gives them, perceiving in the other the echo of their own interests and unspoken dreams.

The Point of Convergence

The stem of the shared enthusiasm that arises between the two friends and produces in each of them the contentment and joy of knowing that the other exists and that he takes you into account, that is, that you count for him, that you matter to him, you occupy a place in his heart, that you are important to the other person, that you are part of their world, and this certainly makes you find the world more beautiful. Friendship helps you see reality from a different point of view, it's like seeing the same old things with new eyes, to look at

things and situations under a new light, and to realize that we can change our point of view.

Paths

Each person is different, and this is a wonderful thing; if we were all identical the world would be very boring. And it's even more wonderful to see that each person – apart from the fact that each of us has their funny ideas – has their own path, a specific orbit where they live and develop their lives, sometimes within a monotonous routine, and sometimes with unexpected events that cause very different reactions, depending on the disposition of each one. Friendship requires that each friend is **master of his ship**, in order to be able to bring out all his potential and use it to gradually and simultaneously get to know himself and that of his friend. All this compels us to live fully awake, because to achieve this you need love, you need faith, you need to personally discover it and open yourself up to it.

Friendship which is for the sake of something to be gained is not friendship, for, to be authentic, friendship does not admit any other purpose than friendship itself.

Friendship cannot be quantified or valued because it belongs to the group of things that are priceless. When it is genuine, it can sense the need or lack of the other long before he has to go through the annoying embarrassment of having to express it in words. Keep in mind that “a friend is someone with whom you can think out loud”.

Pure Friendship

Always with its pluses (+) and minuses (-), as happens in all human things, friendship is a mutual and continuous discovery of new qualities that enables us to live the amazement of new things, when you see them alive in the life of a friend. Therefore, between or among friends

there is always something to tell, to comment on, and to share and therefore, the talk drags on, the farewells never end, and most of the times they are even continued by tele- phone later on. None of this can be imposed from outside, in friendship there is no place for impositions.

In Cursillo we have always said that the tree of friendship cannot be planted or cultivated for its fruits or its shade, but only for the joy of having more trees, for the joy of knowing that they are alive, for the pleasure of their company, because their presence creates closeness.

Anchorage

Friendship, like everything else, is exposed to the thousand circumstances of life. Sometimes the winds are favorable and sometimes they are not, but we have to be determined to face storms – the possibility of which can never be ruled out - with courage.

When friendship is cut and anchored in lives that can assess the values in the light of the most valuable value, and Christ and the Christian life is not a mold for them to adjust to -like it or not, but a loving invitation to become yeast to help Christianity ferment the actual circumstances, the dynamism of this very friendship encourages and moves us to new adventures.

Projection

When friendship is alive and active in the minds and hearts of a community, and those who make up this community live the joy of feeling physically and mentally close to each other, and the word “we” or “us” has an intimate meaning because they share with joy the satisfaction of having the same motive, and each act tends to try and give witness to the ideal that unites them, the very reality of events works with an irresistible push and becomes the most effective

element of “contagion” of spreading the truth of what we believe and live.

Objective

When Christian life prompts many people to say, “see how they love one another” and when the Christians who have caused that expression hear it instead of becoming conceited, strive to help those who have said it to discover something even more fascinating, i.e. to understand why we love one another _Then Christian life gradually centers the life of people, polishing their conduct and moving people to rectify their slips and mistakes. Once more in history the lame can walk, the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

Subjective

This desire to help (here Eduardo refers to injustices, war, violence, addiction, etc) is certainly good, but sometimes these situations, which only with our prayers or our financial contribution can we, in the distance, help to solve, make us forget about the things that really and urgently do need our personal involvement. And this is the people we have around us; perhaps under the same roof there is someone who needs our willingness to listen to them, our understanding and even affection and tenderness in the case of the wife, children, parents, siblings. If we really are Christians, something of our vision and our encouragement must come through friendship to our friends, neighbors, everyone. Not trying to infiltrate it with moralistic and paternalistic sermons, but simply letting it be apparent through our conduct.

Friendship with Oneself

To be a Christian requires, first of all, accepting oneself as we are, to be a friend of oneself. Without this disposition, there is the risk that the

contact and relationship with Christ drifts to a disembodied mysticism, where the actions become more important than the conviction.

Friendship with Christ

Being a Christian today; at a time when distances have been shortened so much, and yet people live so apart from each other, means facilitating environments that enable communication, first and whenever possible, with the ones closest to us, but later or maybe simultaneously, with those “Far-Away”, those as we can read in “The Acts of the Apostles” who do not yet know the Holy Spirit, because nobody has spoken to them about Him; the misinformed and the uninformed, and so on.

We need to communicate with all of them to tell them that we are all brothers and sisters, and especially because, as we have seen a thousand times, when this kind of person (the far-away) captures the heart of the Gospel message, when they realize that God in Christ loves them, and that Christ did not come to the world to embitter their life, but to make it possible for everybody to live a joyful life, they really devote themselves to Him, and those who were once the target of our desire and focus of our prayer, often become an example and spur for (all of) us.

To be a person means to confirm the real “why” in oneself, the real reason for existence and it means to not fall away, victim of the many ways that the world offers to people today to disorient them, to mortgage them, to accelerate their daily living, to choke them with unproductive commitments that, by trivializing their vision, flatten their perspective, in short: to manipulate them.

Obviously, man was never meant to feel fortunate and happy only by avoiding thinking; on the contrary, his faculty of thinking will help him ascertain the meaning and wonder of life.

To be a person is to wish to be oneself and to be oneself is to know that life has a purpose, a meaning, a reason for being, a “why”, a “what for” and a “where to go from here.” And only Christ Who is the Way, the Truth and Life is the total answer to this truth.

And wherever mankind progresses, if it does not progress in the same direction as Christ, who is the Way, and in the light of His Truth and to the rhythm of his Life, then mankind will not evolve because to progress it is necessary that men/women have the “Why”, a reason that is credible, possible, true, humane, fraternal, unifying, attractive, fascinating, enlightening, capable of creating a channel for - and making sense of - the wonderful fact of existence, to live and to devote their living, not to something but to SOMEBODY, because whatever we do for Him, He has loved us first.

What really matters is that we gradually get to understand that our friendship with Christ has to be visible and transparent in our friendly attitude towards others, as we have no doubt that it is friendship that can produce the energy that can move men and women who, being Christians are called to act as leaven in their environments to change the actual reality; this is without doubt possible, if we make the decision to **begin with ourselves**.

I'd like to conclude by share a brief witness to this type of deep friendship in Christ. At our Remembrance Mass January 2020, A long-time cursillista gave the reflection after Mass. She so beautifully spoke of these deep friendships that were made and grew through Cursillo. I asked her if she would send me a copy of the reflection so I could “sit” with it a while. Well, the envelope arrived, with the return address

reading: *Someone who loves you* - in place of her name. I open the envelope and, the first thing I see is...*I share for the love of my friend*. She even made reference to a ship as Eduardo did in this rollo...saying thank you to our cursillistas who have entered their 5th day for the pieces of our ship that we carry with us (even when we are no longer physically together). And, as a grand finale, enclosed with the reflection was a holy card of our BEST FRIEND EVER, JESUS CHRIST with this on the back....

THE MIRACLE of FRIENDSHIP

There's a "Miracle called Friendship"

that dwells within the heart,

And you don't know how it happens or when it gets its start...

But the happiness it brings you always gives a special lift,

And you realize that "FRIENDSHIP" is God's most precious gift!

DeColores!

We give you thanks, Almighty God, for all the benefits You have given us. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.