

IV World Ultreya

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I stand here before my fellow cursillistas present in this arena knowing that I have arrived here by those who have come before me through their palancas, supplications and faith.

I am an American of Korean Catholic cursillistas lineage, born in Korea, bred in the United States since the age of 5, wife of fellow cursillista, Ju Sebastian Kim, mother of Natalie and Evan, daughter of fellow cursillistas, Bonaventure and Clara Kang. Indeed, I am well connected. This is also my disclaimer to my accented and stunted Korean speaking ability.

Immediately, the Cursillo experience was intimate and personal. God spoke directly to me in the silence of the retreat that first night and I was humbled and overwhelmingly loved. I had returned home. Embraced by His welcome, I was overjoyed. Joy. As we moved into the next morning, I did not want to leave the beautiful sounds of the silence that encompassed my whole being.

Entering into the next phase, I was struck as if a lightening bolt had gone through me when palancas were itemized by literally in the millions. It went beyond the ones dedicated to our retreat. If one can calculate just the “palancas” of the acknowledged saints of our church, it would be simply stunning.

Let me begin with the personal palancas of my life. It began with my uncle who was converted in college by an evangelical Catholic (is there even such a thing?) nearly 70 years ago. Recognized by his family as a respected member because he was a student of a prestigious college, my uncle declared that his whole family (which included aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.) must also be evangelized and so they did.

Since the conversion, my extended family has been offering palancas for the present family members but also for the generations to come. This is our heritage not just in my own family, but also in the greater family of our Catholic community.

Fruits of the Cursillo experience for me are relationships, specifically, friendships. Through the Holy Spirit, my husband and I attempt daily to strengthen our relationship as friends, lovers and parents. We fail most of the time but we are kept afloat by our time together in praying the rosary, attendance of daily mass and just dedicating time to being with one another, conversing about the children, current news, or mountain bikes.

In my efforts to reveal the kingdom of God through my relationship with my husband, it has spilled over to the greater community of my relationships with the

cursillistas in the Ultreya group that has met faithfully about twice a month since our retreat last September.

Broken and at times dejected, our Ultreya cursillistas continue to seek hope and are always, knowingly or unknowingly, carried by the palancas of the greater Catholic community. Speaking authentically to me in the intimate embrace of God, we strive, in our relationships, to seek that same authenticity with one another in our Ultreyas to be whole once again.

As a child of immigrants who emigrated from Korea in 1973, I cannot overlook the lives of my parents, my first cursillistas. Despite charting a life in unknown territories in the States with three very young children in tow, my first cursillistas avoided catastrophic consequences by literally and figuratively clinging onto their faith through the rosary, the guidance of our Blessed Mother, and attendance of mass. Nearly 30 years into their first Cursillo experience and now my own, the relationship with my parents has come nearly to a full circle. I know that the palancas will continue even in the next life.

As the Cursillo experience was personal, it was simultaneously, very communal. Through the intimacy of God's embrace, you were able to step out of your being and objectively glimpse the masses without losing the personal and unique recognition of every one of those individuals. More importantly, there is a connection that is undeniable. It is similar to the connection when you recognize a familiar face in a crowd of unfamiliar ones. Except, in this crowd, everyone is intimately familiar.

In that brief glimpse of grace, the kingdom of God is revealed. We do not have to build this kingdom of God. It's already here. Reveal it. Unveil it. Live it.