

My joy.

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After many days of preparation, meetings, and prayers, the Three-Day Cursillo weekend has finally arrived. I am delighted to prepare to serve as a team assistant for Cursillo retreats 60 & 61 Vietnam, San Jose.

The retreat center of Saint Francis, filled with memories, still stands with its old buildings, the familiar path from the kitchen and dining hall to the chapel, passing through the sleeping quarters to the Rollo room. The green grass in front of the courtyard and the brisk sea breeze remind me of the Cursillo retreats held here and the beloved friends of days gone by.

Back then, the Cursillo retreats were always crowded, with many candidates, especially the team assistants, which were like a celebration. Everyone was eager to be part of it. I was young, just like the young ones now, excited and proud to be a team assistant. I would cry when moved, laugh when happy, innocent like angels in heaven.

The older brothers and sisters were very devout and well-dressed, especially when presenting a Rollo. Everyone worked hard and meticulously according to the Three-day Cursillo's Guide with love, care, and concern for each other. At first, it felt like a military training camp because everything was precise and scheduled, but later, I realized it was the incredible technical aspect of the Cursillo Movement.

Standing in front of the chapel, I suddenly remembered Brother Paul Bùi Văn Trác, who sponsored me for Cursillo 161; Brother Louis Lê Xuân Mai, who guided me with ideas and how to present a Rollo; Brother Joseph Bùi Đình Đạm, who supported me when I felt discouraged; Brother Joseph Trần Thái Hoàng, a close friend and companion in many apostolic activities; Father Joseph Cao Phương Kỷ with his joyful yet profound preaching; Father Joseph Phạm Kim Hùng, the spiritual Father of my soul, and Father Paul Phan Quang Cường, who was very close to me in Cursillo activities. These people and many others have been team assistants here for many years. A flood of memories comes back, and unconsciously, I dream of the eternal homeland, the final destination of everyone's earthly journey, where God has prepared for those who carry their crosses with deep love to follow Him.

My joy is that God has granted me the opportunity, time, and health to come here as a team assistant for this retreat. Many others wish to join but need more options. Many also want to come but are overwhelmed by worries and distractions, intending to go but never actually making it because there is no more room in their hearts to embrace the joy of welcoming brothers and sisters.

My joy is seeing everyone happy and enthusiastic in their assigned tasks. Radiant smiles and loving looks make the atmosphere of the retreat irresistible. Everyone takes meticulous care of the retreat's activities and readily obeys to perform every task with a great desire to show love as Jesus loved.

The beginning ceremony for the team assistants and the handing over of responsibilities to the team Head of the retreat are touching moments. Our hearts suddenly calm down, and we realize that we need God's help because we are weak and feeble, yet God entrusted us with the great responsibility of spreading the message of love of our Holy Teacher. Our hearts may not be large enough to embrace everyone, but for God, in God, and with God,

we open our hearts to welcome our brothers and sisters with sincere service, cheerful smiles, and the gentle eyes of God.

I enjoy communal meals and activities with everyone in the Cursillo family. Everyone wants to express their care and concern for others. The food is delicious because our team assistants prepare them with love, late-night work, early morning waking up, and sincere service. During meals, everyone enjoys the unique program presented by the youth. It's not a flashy, colorful stage but simple and sincere. The songs penetrate the heart, soothing fresh wounds that just healed. The songs are like the abundant grace of God pouring into the dry fields after a long drought, bursting into laughter mixed with tears of happiness.

My joy is experiencing God's presence with the Rollistas. The excellent Rollo talks of our dear brothers and sisters remind me and encourage me to live a genuinely faithful life as a believer:

Knowing my limitations to rely on the grace of God.

Knowing God's unconditional love for each of us. Encouraging us to turn to Him in all circumstances, especially loneliness and weakness.

Knowing our brothers and sisters to walk hand in hand on the journey back to the Father's house.

The testimonies in the Rollo talks are simple everyday stories. Yet, they can move hearts, level proud fortresses, fill deep pits of resentment, and lead people back to the original human nature, the True- the Good – the Beautiful with tears of repentance. The words of our dear brothers and sisters in the Rollo talks are not polished or highbrow. Still, they turn into heroic songs that resonate in the hearts, conquer the mind, and pave the way for transformation, returning to the God of Love, the Merciful Father who always embraces us. I felt like God was present with us, using the mouths of our dear brothers and sisters to convey what He wanted to teach us. I was overwhelmed during those sacred moments.

I enjoy seeing the Cursillo Movement's young generation actively participating and equipped with knowledge and a strong desire to serve. They are a positive factor for the future of the movement. To walk alongside them is both a responsibility and a source of pride for previous ones. May God bless the Cursillo Movement with more young brothers and sisters who are willing to dedicate themselves and become a fresh breeze through the Holy Spirit, to rejuvenate and be enthusiastic on the front lines in the mission of spreading God's love to all, especially in a society filled with confusion and wrongdoings that lead to the culture of death as it is today.

Finally, my joy comes from feeling the hand of God arranging and preparing everything for these two retreats. Seeing the big trees with deep roots fall and lie scattered in the narrow kitchen and dining space area without causing damage is truly a miracle. Even the tiny hut and fence remained unscathed. I often wonder why God pays attention to such small things, but then I reflect and remember, *'The Lord watches over all, and He guards everything.'* (Psalm 146).

Dear God, my joy is recognizing Your presence in every event of my life and fellowship with my brothers and sisters in Cursillo events 60 & 61. I write these words to thank You and share my feelings with my brothers and sisters.

May God bless and keep me in His presence forever. Amen.