

## PALANCA, WHAT IS IT?

The Spanish word palanca means 'lever'. A lever enables us to lift something that is beyond our human strength. Just like the lever enables a person to move things, Palanca empowers the accomplishment of things which would not have been possible without the Grace of God. *"For man it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."* (Matt 19:26)

Palanca is petitioning God through any one or a combination of prayer, sacrifice and works of mercy offered for the success of a particular phase or of all phases of the Cursillo Movement, meaning we offer our prayer and sacrifice and works of mercy to God asking him to send His Grace. *What is 'not' Palanca?* For the 3-day weekend, Palanca is not little notes written to individual candidates in the 100s or through mass photocopying and it is not special little gifts or flowers. The Palanca is petitioning God, not just letting candidates on our weekends know that we are praying for them. This means we offer our prayer and sacrifice and works of mercy to God asking Him to send His Grace for ALL those on the weekend. An indication of the Palanca being done can be sent BY an individual but should be addressed to the WHOLE weekend. The idea is that we are praying for the success of the Cursillo weekend, that all will encounter God and His Grace. The important thing is to actually *do* palanca for all the team and the candidates, as a whole.

Mallorca would say that good Palanca is to do something specific, something that costs us, not to just tack the intentions of the Cursillo on to those acts of piety that we normally do. In Mallorca they maintain that attending the mañanita is Palanca for the weekend and attending the Clausura is continuing Palanca for the Cursillo weekend because for them, attending often means a fairly lengthy drive *after* they have already attended the mañanita on the same day.

Palanca might mean babysitting for one of the candidates or taking supper over to a man who is looking after his children while the wife is on the weekend. The following is a story from a person who worked on a team.

*When I was a team member on a particular weekend, there was one man whose wife was a candidate on a weekend who didn't send his wife a 'palanca letter'. Someone from the team phoned him and he said; "I have spent the weekend mending the kitchen door and fixing up the kitchen, it is something she has been asking me to do for a long time. I offered my work as palanca". At the time we*

*were quite stunned at this notion but in conversation with Mallorca leaders we realize now that this was good palanca. It is of course the same as when we offer our trials and difficulties for the good of someone else.*

In the authentic Cursillo, personal letters are unheard of, especially for the team. A group reunion may send some notice that they are praying or an individual may. These notices are pinned up or displayed on a table throughout the weekend. To send personal letters to individual Cursillistas has the effect of taking them out of the environment of the Cursillo itself and back to their home environments, it serves as a distraction.

If this isn't how it works on your weekend and when you try to implement this in your movements, you will probably get some resistance but if you discuss it and reflect on it your leaders should understand. The people who will react negatively will be those (if any) who are on the team but are not on the same journey as you and your leaders. It may be necessary to remind them that the candidates will not miss the written notes, they don't know anything about them. What is important is for them to realize that there are people who don't know them who are actively praying and sacrificing for their good. The reality that others are praying for Cursillistas on the weekend is referenced by the Rector in the skiing story in the Rector's talk after the Piety Rollo (Appendix 8 of the Step by Step Guide to the Cursillo weekend). It is the first intimation that there is a community outside the weekend that is supporting them and is the precursor to the message of the third day; that there are many who are waiting to welcome them to the fourth day.