

WHAT PASEO HAS MEANT TO ME

So, I'm sitting in my office, minding my own business, when Ben Baker emails me to ask if I would give a brief talk at this Ultreya on what Paseo has meant to me. Almost immediately upon my reading the email, I typed - of course, I would be happy to give the talk- I hit send - since then I have kind of struggled in how to talk about this subject. It has been more than two decades since I made my Cursillo; how can I relate anything that it has meant to me with the passage of that much time?

[25 year marriage story - thia can be plugged in, if desired] - most times, it is only with the passage of time that I can see where I am, how I got there, and, hopefully, where to go from there. My wife and I made our Cursillo (now Paseo) in 1983 or 1984. It was a great and powerful experience for us. However, Paseo is not a final destination...it is a jolt from the Holy Spirit, with a goodly portion of Christian love and fellowship, with a lot of singing and laughing mixed in. It is a powerful and good mixture, that, I promise, you will not want to end. But it will end, and what happens after it is over was the most difficult part for me.

I heard the weekend described, years ago, as a "boot camp for Christians." It is, I think, intended to equip all who make a Paseo to be propelled down a path of discipleship and evangelism that works for the spread of God's Kingdom. It will, I think, make you salty, as St. Matthew states:

"You are the salt of the earth."

However, Paseo, in and of itself, will not sustain you; it did not sustain me. You must act to remain salty. As Matthew continues:

But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men." Matt 5:13.

As I said earlier, Paseo is a boot camp, it is not a spa. My priest, John Michael van Dyke, described the church as a battleship, not a cruise ship. I know that metaphor is not necessarily original with him, but it is apt...Paseo as a boot camp is the beginning of training and it is incomplete, just as boot camp for soldiers is not the end of training, but the beginning. It must be followed with Bible study, prayer, accountability with our brothers and sisters, witnessing to those outside the church...Paseo will propel you into

these things. But, we, the church, sail on a battleship, not a cruise ship...make no mistake, we sail into harms way and the warfare will wear us down if our training stops at Paseo. As Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus:

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:11-13, NKJV).

Decades after making my Cursillo or Paseo, some very persistent brothers in Christ insisted that I join Bible Study Fellowship. BSF, a Thursday morning Bible study, small groups, intentional prayer time, have all continued what Paseo should have begun. Unfortunately, I spent twenty-some years losing my saltiness. Brothers and sisters, Paseo is a few days immersed in the Holy Spirit, immersed in the love of Jesus Christ, immersed in the love of other Christians...what happens with you after boot camp, after you have been well salted, is up to you. I think Paul would paraphrase the Ephesians passage with two words – “Battle Stations!”

AMEN.