

## The Blessed Joys of Friendship and Knowledge

By: Sis Evelyn Isidro

On a cold January evening I said to my Cursillo brother and husband, Mike, that I am going to attend the newly formed School of Leaders (SOL) book club.

"You are?" he asked, frowning curiously. Mike never heard of this book club before and at the time, neither did I, so I just shrugged my shoulders in agreement.

On one of its maiden meetings, Sis. Celsa Taraya requested I write about the SOL book club, which I accepted in the spirit of love and collaboration, and to share my joyful and rewarding experience to the community.

The SOL book club is not about bringing a book to read to the meeting as one might expect.

The book club, which debuted in December of 2020, is a reading group with a specific topic to read and talk about and consists of members of our FCC community led by Sister Gid, Chair of the School of Leaders.

We read the material prior to the meeting. That allows us to take down notes, prepare and ask questions for further clarification.

Sister Gid provides direction for the book club. She moderates and facilitates the discussions and prepares questions for the group.

The book club helps the SOL technical speakers prepare for their talk. Speakers are assigned to talk on topics picked by Sis Gid and the SOL committee. They discuss and provide valuable insights concerning their topic in the book club.

The club does not feel like work for us but rather a gathering of friends, so it is a good dynamic. Everyone is so comfortable with each other. The discussion just flows naturally, and all are willing to share their thoughts openly without it becoming a debate.

It is an intellectual space for airing and exchanging ideas; it is a collegial platform to help each other engage with complex difficult ideas and provides an opportunity to share valuable insights on how they feel about what they read. Everyone's opinion helps to make a good discussion.

I love to sit back and watch the conversation flow around the topic. I learn so much about the members of the book club when they share their views and how they connect with the topic.

The SOL book club allows us to be more involved in the community because of the friendship that is deepened by learning and growing together and appreciating and respecting each other's thoughts and opinions.

Most of all, the remarkable power of friendship allows us to share so much; uncontrollable laughs at jokes, off-topic sharing of ups and downs, fears, and many unforgettable moments. The book club has blessed me with a group of strong, collaborative and hardworking members who never cease to amaze me with their honesty, empathy, support, and love.

We are currently reading and discussing the 1st Conversations of Cala Figuera. It consists of ten topics that are the foundational core of the Cursillo Movement: Person, Freedom, Love, Friendship, Conviction, Sincerity, Criterion, Life, Normality and Joy for 2021-2022.

In late December 2020 and February 2021, we read and discussed "The Person" and "Freedom". They were hard topics to discuss but I was amazed at how they led to become our best discussions. Everyone left invigorated.

"The Person" and "Freedom" have been presented at the SOL technical presentations in January and March 2021 respectively. The technical speakers did an awesome job in delivery, topic content and flow of thought.

Sis Gid is still extending the invitation to others to join. This is not exclusive to the SOL committee members only. Everyone is welcome.

Members meet on the 2nd and 4th Monday of every month. To give room for our work-life balance, we start at 7 p.m. and end at 9 p.m. via Zoom, which has been a great way to connect during this time of pandemic.

May the book club continue to help us study the environment, to know thyself, Christ and others.

De Colores.