

## **CURSILLO DE CURSILLOS, WHAT IS IT?**

*Source: National Cursillo Center Mailing – February 2010*

Our Cursillo Movement's Leader's Manual (LM) clearly elaborates on the evolution of the Cursillo Movement, which did not begin by accident. It evolved after a series of events. None of these events were focused on the development of a Cursillo Movement, but all of them led to its development. To view each of these events is an opportunity to witness God's handiwork. It will become quite evident that the Cursillo Movement did not just happen – God willed it to be. The book also declares the great task of building the Kingdom of God is here and now. This task requires audacious and courageous Christians with personality, firm in their convictions and at the same time docile to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; men and women of the century (laity) who leaven their environments with their witness of life, because they are fully convinced that it is more important "to be" than "to do" (LM Prologue).

The country of Spain painfully suffered from the Spanish Civil war from 1936 to 1939, the most calamitous anticlerical persecution in the Christian history, and which was immediately followed by the Second World War. Consequently, on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1940 in Rome, Pope Pius XII gave an address and stated, "It is the duty of the parish priests to look at the dual aspect of his parishioners to form a clear and carefully detailed picture .. of his community. i.e.: on the one hand the population of the faithful, especially its outstanding members .. and on the other hand, the groups that have moved away from the practice of Christian Life. They are the sheep that belong to the parish; lost sheep, and also for these and even for them particularly, you are responsible custodians, my dearest children, and as good pastors you must not dodge any effort or work to find them and win them over again, nor must you indulge in any rest until all of them have found safety, life and joy in the return to the fold." (My Spiritual Testament", p.28-29, by Eduardo Bonnín).

Inspired by the Pope's address, Mr. Eduardo Bonnín started a thorough study of the scenario and atmosphere in the most concrete way: "From all this in 1943, the "Study of the Environment" was born and it was the beginning of the origin of all that came afterwards." ("My Spiritual Testament", p.30, by Eduardo Bonnín).

In order to help Cursillo leaders with an intensive knowledge of the foundational charism, namely the mentality, the essence, the methodology, the strategy and the purpose of our Cursillo Movement, a special weekend called "Cursillo de Cursillos" was developed by Eduardo Bonnín. It is a working three-day weekend highly recommended for willfully committed and dedicated Cursillo leaders, and the current and/or prospective ones. They must know their Movement well in order to love and serve it faithfully and efficiently. This workshop is the replica of the regular Cursillo Three-Day Weekend, with more or less the same format, schedule, and length of time, except that each Rollo is followed by a careful discussion within each 'decuria' or table group. Sufficient time is also allotted for questions and answers at the end of each rollo. One member is assigned to represent their decuria in sharing the group's reflections, ideas and questions. This format worked very well and everyone grasped the main ideas of each Rollo adequately. Besides

increasing their indispensable knowledge of the Cursillo Movement, the Cursillo leaders will have an opportunity during this workshop to make personal contacts, to strengthen and renew their friendship or to make new friends, to share and learn from one another many useful individual living experiences in discipleship and leadership, and in particular, to deepen their on-going conversion through their encounters with God, with themselves and with others. Similar to the Three-Day Cursillo Weekend, the Cursillo de Cursillos must be a living experience for all Cursillo leaders.

The Cursillo de Cursillos is not unfamiliar with the Spanish-speaking Cursillo leaders, but it is to the English-speaking Cursillo community. The Cursillo de Cursillos was introduced in Spanish in 1966, but unfortunately, was not translated into English at the time.

Some English-speaking Cursillo leaders in the United States and Canada had an opportunity to attend the first Cursillo de Cursillos in 2007 which was given in English in Mallorca, Spain. Then in July 2008, another was sponsored by the Canadian National Cursillo Movement in Waterloo, Canada, with a team of Cursillo leaders who had lived the experience earlier in Mallorca. In late October, and in early December 2009, a Cursillo de Cursillos in English was held in Miami, FL., and in Forth Worth, TX, respectively. These first workshops in English have greatly impressed the participants, whose inspiration has prompted them to wholeheartedly promote the Cursillo de Cursillos within their own community.

In the Editor's Preface of the "Structures of Ideas", one finds the quote, "Dostoevski says that the worst enemies of a movement are those who become its promoters without understanding it." Moreover, while emphasizing the Cursillo leaders' dire need to learn, Fr. Frank S. Salmani, in his book 'Whom Shall I Send?', has reminded us that one of several conditions recommended for being a leader for Christ in the First Letter of Timothy, is that we must continue to be students of our faith. The priest has given us this warning, "A leader is not a person who says 'I don't need to hear this stuff anymore!'" A leader is always seeking to learn more and delve more deeply into the mystery of Christ. Further, if we believe that the Cursillo is the best method to Christianize the world, we have to know as much about it as possible. A "little" knowledge is a dangerous thing. What we need is ongoing formation" (Ch. 10, p 62 & 63).

The Cursillo de Cursillos helps the Cursillo leaders delve into all spiritual and technical elements of our Movement in light of its charism. A total of 15 Rollos and 5 Meditations are presented. This workshop starts on Thursday evening and concludes on Sunday afternoon, but unlike the regular Three-Day Weekend, it is more relaxing with much free time for rest, for reflection, for personal contact, for spiritual direction, and for individual visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Everyone feels relaxed with plenty of rest and friendship throughout the three days.

The topics of the 15 Rollos are taken from the Cursillo book entitled "Structure of Ideas" (Vertebration) by Eduardo Bonnín, Francisco Forteza and Bernardo Vadell, a revised English translation with added footnotes, fourth edition, printed in 2007. The rollos are

presented by the lay Cursillistas in the following order: (1) The Coordinator's Introductory Rollo, (2) The Mentality of the Cursillo Movement, (3) The Essence and Purpose of the Movement, (4) The Methodology and Strategy of the Cursillo, (5) Living and Sharing What Is Fundamental to Be a Christian, (6) Dangers and Deviations in the Movement, (7) The Cursillo Movement In The Pastoral Ministry of the Church, (8) Pre-Cursillo, (9) the Three-Day Cursillo Weekend, (10) Group Reunion, (11) Ultreya, (12) School of Leaders, (13) Secretariat, (14) The Priest in the Cursillo Movement, and (15) the Functions of the Lay Cursillo Leader.

The five meditations are given by the Spiritual Advisor: (1) Who Am I? Do I know Myself? Why Did I Come?; (2) Who Is Christ? Do I Know Him?, Can He Still Count On Me?; (3) In What Disposition Does Christ See me Now?; (4) Christ The Leader; (5) How Does Christ Want Me From Now On? The Spiritual Advisor also shares the Rollo #14 above. The Workshop concludes with the Celebration of the Eucharist and Clausura. The agenda and schedule are flexible and adaptable to the needs of the participants and the circumstances.

The team consists of one Coordinator, a Spiritual Advisor and Rollistas, who arrange among themselves the assignments of sharing the Lay Rollos. Each Rollista, the Coordinator inclusive, is assigned to sit with a decuria of 6 to 8 members. The kitchen team does not take part in the Workshop.

In "The Structure of Ideas", the authors have written, "What is presented here is not an attempt merely to rework the subject or to make it knottier, but rather to simplify the steps already taken and to un-tie the knots which history has managed to fasten about the Cursillo Movement.

The Cursillo de Cursillos is obviously a fitting opportunity for Cursillo leaders to learn more about our Cursillo Movement as asserted earlier. The best benefits that the Cursillo de Cursillos Weekend participants could receive are the very living personal experiences the Rollistas share in their Rollos and other participants contribute in their discussions. These living witnesses are very unique and helpful. The attendees will learn the best ways to persevere in their progressive conversion, which is indispensable for them to successfully carry out their apostolic and administrative duties as leaders, how and why to help new Cursillistas form and maintain Friendship Groups, how and why to conduct an efficient School of Leaders, how and why to organize a joyful and fruitful Ultreya, how and why to get along with others on the Secretariat, how and why to make personal contacts in a Three-Day Cursillo, how and why to implement an authentic Pre-Cursillo, Cursillo, and Post-Cursillo, how and why to build a friendly relationship with Spiritual Advisors, and many, many more useful how's and why's.

We, Cursillo leaders, should keep our Cursillo Movement simple and make ourselves humble servants. Mr. Eduardo Bonnín kept reminding us that the Cursillo Movement must be as simple as Our Lord's Prayer. A significant analogy can be drawn between the Cursillo Movement and the Mustard Seed in Jesus's Parable, as Father Gabriel illustrates in his meditation: "Nothing was smaller or more humble in its beginnings than "the

Kingdom of Heaven,” the Church: Jesus, its Head and founder, was born in a stable; he worked for the greater part of thirty years in a carpenter’s shop, and for only three years unfolded his mission to a poor people, preaching a doctrine so simple that all, even the unlettered, could understand. When Jesus left the earth, the Church was established by an insignificant group of twelve men, gathered about a humble woman, Mary; but this first nucleus possessed so powerful a vitality that in a few years it spread into all the countries of the vast Roman Empire. The Church, from a very tiny seed, sown in the hearts of a Virgin Mother and of poor fishermen, became little by little through the centuries a gigantic tree, extending its branches into all regions of the globe, with peoples of every tongue and nation taking shelter in its shade” (Magnificat, Oct. 27, 2009).

Ultreya!