



The Cursillo® Movement

National Cursillo® Center · P.O. Box 210226 · Dallas, TX 75211 · 214-339-6321 · Fax 214-339-6322 · www.natl-cursillo.org

February 2007

To: National Mailing Recipients

Fm: National Cursillo® Center

Re: February National Mailing

IMPORTANT CRITERIA OR PRINCIPLES ON THE ESSENCE, MENTALITY AND PURPOSE

Cursillos in Christianity is a gift from the Holy Spirit to the person of Eduardo Bonnín. This gift, Charism, was passed on to Eduardo in its entirety. Eduardo being a faithful and trustworthy steward of this gift passed it on to the Church as it was given to him – complete and without adaptations.

We are called to do likewise. However, the only way we can be faithful stewards of this gift, the Cursillo Movement, is to be connected to the source – Jesus Christ, through a Master/Disciple relationship in order to be enlightened to make the right decisions with conviction and constancy. Below are some quotes from some early writings on Cursillo:

Karl Rahner said there must be a simple formula “for what is fundamental” but this is difficult to arrive at. How do you define what is fundamental for being a Christian? It is what gives meaning and substance to what we live as Christians. It is what we all have in common through Baptism no matter what position we occupy in the Church. It is perennially constant because it is essentially evangelical. If I do something in line with the gospel, if it is evangelical, it is because I live what is fundamental for being a Christian. (The Cursillo, Yesterday and Today by Fr. Juan Capo)

The need for having a clear statement of principles, motives, facts and systems is without a doubt more than a sufficient reason to move us to attain it. At the same time, the lack of it, regretfully, might be the cause of wrong orientations and a waste of efforts, perhaps not reprehensible but certainly always unacceptable. (Structure of Ideas, Preliminary Notes)

Whenever something uncommon or shocking is observed in the Cursillos in Christianity – whether in the Precursillo, in the Cursillos proper or in the Postcursillo – we can be confident that some adaptation has been introduced.

Someone has said that the Cursillos in Christianity are “codified common sense.” There is much truth in this phrase. We may judge everything that appears with abnormal characteristics to be an adaptation or an impulsive addition by someone who feels a need for originality.

The desire to be original is the least original to which we can yield, since vanity easily seeks originality. If we were to deepen our humility, we should have fewer desires to be original, especially when such originality contributes to the prejudice of the current of Grace which the Holy Spirit pours forth, or to the prejudice of the fruitful unity of a movement which already bears within it the guarantee of a proven efficacy and of admirable fruits.

The Cursillos in Christianity are a magnificent instrument of Christian renewal, with surprising results. And it is not strange that the evil spirit does his best to avail himself even of persons of good will to spoil and corrupt their substance so that this promising rebirth may remain a mere flash which will later be extinguished little by little.

The Cursillos in Christianity constitute a complete method which there is no reason to vary, now that its results, in conformity with the lesson of experience, continue to be extraordinary.
(Questions and Problems by Bishop Juan Hervás)

With that said, the following is a summary by Eduardo Bonnín of “some” of the most important criteria or principles on the Essence, Mentality and Purpose of the Movement “Cursillos in Christianity”.

ESSENCE

“Cursillos in Christianity” is a movement that, through a method of its own, tries to (and through God’s grace manages to) enable the essential realities of Christian life to come to life in the uniqueness, originality and creativity of each person. In becoming aware of their potential and while accepting their limitations they increasingly develop an interest in using their freedom of choice to turn their potential into firm conviction, by using their willpower to make decisions, and their perseverance and determination to make their potential apparent in both their personal and community life.

MENTALITY

- KNOWING THAT WE BELIEVE is far superior to believing that we know.
- To be Christian is more important than doing Christian things.
- The wonderful bewilderment caused by my realization of the truth that God loves me, puts me in a position from which the first commandment appears to be unquestionable, and it becomes clear to us that, besides it being very pleasant to be grateful, it is also undoubtedly “just and necessary”.

When the fact that GOD LOVES THEM dawns on someone, when it dawns on me that GOD LOVES ME, then the fact that one day I shall be held accountable for what I did with my life becomes of little account, because I am able to see it from a different perspective.

At this point one becomes aware of the fact that God is not observing them as a policeman; He is instead, looking at them with compassionate interest and love, the same way that a father looks at his son or a grandfather looks at his grandchild.

- Everything that is suggested by God is clear and concrete. When the devil realizes that he is not going to succeed in misleading somebody into doing something that is evil, he will then endeavor to tempt them into doing very many good things, so that they feel overwhelmed, weary and tired, and will do them all badly.
- More important than the action itself is the reaction that takes place in the interior of the person. A Christian is known not only by his actions, but by his reactions.
- The deeper and greater knowledge that we have of what is true and everlasting in life, the easier it will be for us to diminish the pressure of, and guard ourselves against the lures and assaults of what is transitory and readily available.
- We will experience that the person, what we really are, is worth more than the role or “character” we are forced to enact in our life.

The world’s motto is “everything for a price”. What is important to a Cursillista, or to a Christian however, is not the principle of price, but rather the principle of dignity. That is, we should not endeavor or try to find out what the price of something is, but rather realize how priceless people are. God’s creation is indeed spectacular, but the very epitome of that creation is the human person.

- Being Christian helps us to see everyday things in a new light and thus, instead of feeling that our daily lives are dull and repetitious, we progressively discover the charms and beauty of everyday things.
- The human race does not change. Since God’s creation it has remained substantially the same. The human person flees from their fears and strives towards their dreams. The challenge and threats of this world to the men and women of today have the same old cause. That is, the active absence of God in the minds and hearts of people. Therefore, the solution is always the same. The solution is Christ and His Grace, which is the only thing that can give meaning to life.
- Apparently, many people have not been able to resist the temptation of changing and substituting the “new and up to date methods and ways” for the “former and outdated ones”, but they have forgotten fidelity to the Cursillo Movement. Precisely because of its great simplicity, some ideas and views have been identified and removed because, from today’s perspective, they could be defined as belonging to a particular time-frame in the past. But these very things are the structural and everlasting necessities and features which should remain unaltered, in force and distinct.

We have to approach people irrespective of their circumstances. If we aim at and address a person’s worldly circumstances or the role that they play in life, we ignore the reality that they are children of God and all our efforts become incomprehensible and for naught.

The way that people react to problems that occur in life, (their attitude) is the area in which Cursillo can, and does, have an influence. People always react in the same way, in any place or culture. Attitudes and reactions have not changed they are the same today as they have always been. We understand attitude as people’s stance when faced with their daily life.

PURPOSE

- The Cursillo's purpose, target and vision is a "Church of People" rather than "people of the Church". There have always been "people of the Church" or churchgoers. What we need are people who, with their firm conviction, generous decision and proven constancy, will testify to the joy and cheerfulness they experience from their Christian life.
- Cursillos in Christianity were not conceived, thought over, structured and prayed for to evangelize the world but to evangelize people.
- The Cursillos in Christianity Movement was not born as an answer for the Church to the world, but as a means of communicating to people the Good News that God loves them.
- The Cursillo Movement is a tool designed to help people to get to know themselves, to realize that they do exist, that they are, and that other people exist too and to make them feel anxious to get to know each other.
- We have to endeavor to make it known to everyone that God loves them. Nobody should live unaware of the fact that God loves them. The only thing we can pass on to other people is the conviction and faith we have that Christ loves us. If we do not have it, we cannot pass it on, nor bring about change, leavening or fermentation in anything; attitudes, environments or structures. Instead we shall appease, smooth over, as we always do.... and we shall go on criticizing and gossiping endlessly about those we call the "bad ones", and keeping an account of their alleged wickedness and evils, and we shall keep on lamenting how bad the world is.
- The Cursillo has a preference for the "Faraway" or distant ones, because they are our Lord's preferential target and those who need Him the most.

We should not think that the "Faraway" are only the Prodigal Son or the Woman at the Well but also those who are far away from knowing about or having Christian principles.

Probably those people who have to face and deal with ideas from a purely human perspective are closer to understanding all this. That is why the "Faraway" are a preferential though not exclusive option.

NATIONAL CURSILLO[®] MOVEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA CELEBRATES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The 17th National Cursillo[®] Encounter will be held at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), Arlington, Texas, on June 29 - July 2, 2007. The theme for the 2007 Encounter is: "God Is Love" (1 John 4:16), taken from Pope Benedict's First Encyclical Letter on Christian Love. St. John of the Cross tells us that the Father has only ever spoken one Word and that Word has taken flesh as Jesus Christ. This one word is a word of Love that is directed to us and that word is a word that is effective, that is, it is a word that changes (metanoia) those who are willing to listen. The Love of God made flesh invites us to enter into the peace and freedom of God's Divine Love (agape) so that we may find complete joy in Him and in the love through which we serve our brothers and sisters. We invite you to come to a better understanding of the Transformative Grace which is offered to us through Christ Our Lord, by attending the 17th National Encounter.

The Encounter will commence on Friday, June 29, 2007 with the Keynote Address, to be immediately followed by Eucharistic Adoration, Reconciliation, and Benediction. Please note that this year's Encounter will run Friday through Monday unlike other years (Thursday – Sunday).

In May 1957, a group of 17 Spanish-speaking men candidates and a team composed of 2 lay persons and one priest held the first Cursillo in the United States, at St. Francis Church in Waco, Texas. To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the National Cursillo® Movement, the Encounter program will include a pilgrimage from UTA to St. Francis Church on Sunday, July 1, 2007. Sunday's celebration and fellowship activities will take place at the Waco Convention Center.

The Encounter's Fiesta will include time for one performance (song or dance) from the different cultures and ethnic groups in the National Cursillo® Movement. Dioceses wishing to be included in this program must contact the National Cursillo® Center at 214-339-6321 by May 31, 2007. The timeline for this year's program is limited, but we hope to accommodate each of the different cultural groups.

The registration cost is \$325.00 if you register by April 20, 2007. We strongly encourage you to make your plans now to attend the 17th National Cursillo® Encounter by sending the attached registration form to the National Cursillo® Center.

You can register on-line at www.natl-cursillo.org by using the registration form. Lodging capacity is 800 persons. Rooms will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. The Registration Fee includes transportation to/from Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) International Airport, to/from Waco Convention Center, three nights lodging, dinner on Friday evening, 3 meals on Saturday and Sunday, and breakfast on Monday morning. UTA is approximately 30 minutes from DFW International Airport.

We invite you to go online at www.uta.edu/maps to view a layout of UTA campus. While online you can also visit the City of Arlington webpage at www.ci.arlington.tx.us and the City of Waco webpage at www.waco-texas.com, for more information about places to visit while in the area.

Please send your palanca to the National Cursillo® Center, P.O. Box 210226, Dallas, TX 75211. The fax number is 214-339-6322 or you can e-mail your palanca to nationalcursillo.center@verizon.net.

PRECURSILLO

It is really difficult for anyone to talk about the Precursillo stage of our Movement to the majority of Cursillistas who still have the Three-Day Cursillo mentality. This reminds us of a passage in the Gospel of St. Mark in which *“Jesus told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him. He had cured many and as a result, those who had diseases were pressing upon him to touch him.”*

Some people may say these two thoughts are not in any way relevant! However, we would imagine that Jesus was overwhelmed at the immensity of the people's diseases just as our Three-Day Cursillo Weekend is so much overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and passion of both the Cursillistas as team members and the candidates that it casts a foggy shadow over the Precursillo

and Postcursillo stages in our Cursillo Movement. Our Fundamental Ideas (FI) asserts that the three stages of our Cursillo Movement are so closely connected that they constitute an organic whole, and a failure in the functioning of any one of the three stages will have direct consequences on the other two, and therefore on the development of the Cursillo Movement as a whole” (FI # 201).

Some people, unfortunately, still consider that the Cursillo Weekend is the most important activity in our Movement and, therefore, it becomes indispensable. Others even believe the Cursillo Movement will be “dead” in a diocese if there are no Three-Day Cursillo Weekends put on every year. The fact that Jesus needed to get away from those people who would probably crush him certainly cautions the diocesan Cursillo leadership against misusing the Cursillo Weekend by following the crowd to lead our Movement in the wrong direction.

Our founding father, Eduardo Bonnín, keeps reminding us of converting ourselves and others, and consequently, the environments will be naturally transformed. The first step towards this goal is, according to Juan Capó Bosch in his book “Lower Your Nets”, to maintain some minimal structure if a Cursillo is to have permanent results: a Diocesan Secretariat and a School of Leaders.

In addition to a prayerful and apostolic community as a witness to the authenticity of the Christian life, there is a great need for the personal influence and contact which the Cursillista has with those he wishes to invite to make a Cursillo. Such an invitation should be personal, through a true friendship, so that the relationship may last long in the best interests of our evangelizing endeavors. Advertisements of the Cursillo Weekends on parish and diocesan newsletters or through any secular media are seriously discouraged.

In his book “Lower Your Nets, Juan Capó Bosch focused mainly on the person: selecting and orienting the candidates for the Cursillo Weekend. Quite a few Cursillistas are convinced that the Precursillo is to simply get people to come, and leave it to the Holy Spirit to do the rest. Some consider the Cursillo as a cure-all and therefore, they wholeheartedly sign up their so-called “lukewarm” relatives and people with “spiritual” problems. Juan Capó Bosch used the following anecdote to illustrate the urgency of first “transforming the individual members and afterwards to place them so that in a wise and diligent use of their talents, they apply themselves effectively to the transformation of their world. All this is called “Christian Backbone Making in the Environment”, in other words, creating a Christian backbone in the environment.

A young boy, who was traveling with his father in a train compartment, kept asking his father questions about many things. He hoped he could make his father forget his failure in geography at the end of his last school term. Instead, his father was much annoyed because he could not read his newspaper peacefully. Suddenly, he noticed a full-page advertisement featuring a map of the world. He tore it into small pieces of various sizes and challenged his son to put them together again with a promised monetary reward. He believed he would then have at least half an hour to read his newspaper without interruption. Unfortunately, the boy successfully completed the puzzle in about 2 minutes. His father was amazed and wondered how his son, who had failed in geography, could have done it so fast. The boy shared his secret: he put together the figure of a man in a tailor’s ad on the other side of the map, instead. The boy said it was much easier to remake the man and in that way to remake the world.

The suitable candidate, besides being a baptized Catholic, must have a “certain personality”, i.e. capable of making his/her own decisions from his/her own motives, of moving others with his/her opinions, of giving impetus to others by his/her actions, of acting freely and lovingly, and in other words, of becoming salt, light and leaven through Christian core groups’ support and encouragement. The Fundamental Ideas states “it is indispensable to give the candidates an adequate preparation so that they can get the most from the Cursillo experience; such a preparation will also facilitate their entry or re-entry into a group, a nucleus, or a community, during the time of the Postcursillo” (FI # 230).

The sponsors’ responsibilities should not stop as soon as their invited candidates enter the Cursillo Weekend, i.e. after the Precursillo stage, but they must definitely continue throughout the Fourth Day of both the sponsors and their new Cursillistas, in prayers and in actions. The sponsors themselves should help the new Cursillistas form/find a Friendship Group Reunion and regularly accompany them to Ultreya. We are all instructed that “we do not find Total Security by attending Group Reunion and Ultreya, we find Total Security by coming to understand that God loves us, unconditionally. i.e. there is nothing that can separate us from the Love of God found in Christ Jesus etc..., and Total Security in this context does not mean that life is now free of worries and problems. It simply means that in finding friendship with Christ, we come to understand how God loves us. It is the Group Reunion and Ultreya that give us support and help us to continue the process of conversion in which we deepen our friendship with Christ, becoming more and more convinced of God’s love which is where we find Total Security” (“Total Security” Rollo - Cursillo Manual 2006).

It is a great encouragement that some diocesan Cursillo leaders have started to realize the necessity of finding time to evaluate the progress of their service to the Movement, namely the Cursillistas in their evangelizing mission in their ‘Fourth Day’. The leaders may help their Cursillo community revive and deepen its knowledge of the purpose, mentality, essence, and Foundational Charism of our Cursillo Movement through various workshops administered either by national, regional service teams or by its own diocesan Secretariat and School of Leaders.

CATHOLIC FAITH ENRICHMENT

The National Cursillo[®] Movement in partnership with Lighthouse Catholic Media, a division of Saint Joseph Communications will be providing talks on sound Catholic teaching. The CD’s will contain talks by renowned speakers such as Archbishop Fulton Sheen, Fr. John Corapi, Dr. Scott Hahn, and others. The talks are one way to enrich your life and your Catholic faith. The details will be on the www.natl-cursillo.org site by February 15, 2007.

E-ULTREYA WEB SITE

The National Secretariat continues to ask for your support for the e-Ultreya Internet version of the Ultreya Magazine, by both submitting a witness article and by encouraging all Cursillistas to submit witness articles to the e-Ultreya. It is located on our National Cursillo[®] Movement website www.natl-cursillo.org and then click on “e-Ultreya”. This is also the site where palanca requests are handled.

CURSILLO MATERIAL PRICE INCREASE

Due to price increase of manufacturing materials, the new price of the Crucifix (Nickel plated, modern 2”) #300A, is \$4.50 effective February 1, 2007.

EVANGELIZATION WALK

To coordinate the event throughout the United States, the Evangelization Walk is scheduled on the day before Pentecost, which is Saturday, May 26th this year. However, feel free to plan your Walk anytime it is convenient for your Diocese. The National Cursillo[®] Center still has “Evangelization Walk” T-shirts available for \$7.00 plus shipping. For more information, call us at (214) 339-6321 or email us at nationalcursillo.center@verizon.net.

NATIONAL CURSILLO GIFT SHOP

We encourage you to take a look and “browse” through the Cursillo[®] merchandise being offered. You can visit our on-line store by going to our gift shop website www.nationalcursillogiftshop.com and browse through the Specials by clicking on the “Specials” link. The gift shop can also be accessed through a link on our National website.

DONATIONS

The National Cursillo[®] Movement gratefully welcomes your donations. Your financial support advances the evangelization function of the Movement and is eligible for tax deductions purposes.

PALANCA INTENTIONS

Mondays – National, Regional, and Diocesan Secretariats

Tuesdays – Schools of Leaders

Wednesdays – Cursillistas in the United States

Thursdays – National Cursillo[®] Movement’s Apostolic Actions

Fridays – Cursillo Weekends

Saturdays – OMCC Executive Committee

Thank you for joining the National Cursillo[®] Movement of the United States in offering *palanca* for these intentions.

We wish you and your family many blessings throughout this New Year.

Your Humble Servants,

Victor Lugo – National Executive Director

Ceferino Aguillón, Jr. – National English-speaking Coordinator

Jorge Barceló – National Spanish-speaking Coordinator

Joachim Le – National Vietnamese-speaking Coordinator