



The Cursillo® Movement

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June 2008

To: National Mailing Recipients
Fm: National Cursillo® Center
Re: June National Mailing

A REFLECTION ON OUR HOLY FATHER'S TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES



Fr. Einer R. Ochoa

“I am the Way and the Truth and the Life”. A reflection from our National Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Einer R. Ochoa.

The recent visit of our Holy Father Benedict XVI to the United States was a special time of grace for all of us. He reminded us of the truth of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, and our responsibility as disciples to evangelize in that truth which the Gospel.

In relation to our piety he called on all of us to be a source of renewal and hope for the church in the United States and to strengthen our responsibility for the life of our nation.

In his Homily, at the Mass at Yankee Stadium, Bronx, New York the Holy Father quoted Jn 14:6 where Jesus says that he is “the way, and the truth and the life”. “Christ is the way that leads to the Father, the truth which gives meaning to human existence, and the source of that life which is eternal joy with all the saints in His Heavenly Kingdom.”

He alluded to the 200 years of spiritual growth, the legacy of our ancestors, our openness to the immigrant waves and the price we paid for freedom.

On Freedom:

“The Gospel teaches us that true freedom, the freedom of the children of God, is found only in the self-surrender which is part of the mystery of love. Only by losing ourselves, the Lord tells us, do we truly find ourselves (cf. Lk 17:33). True freedom blossoms when we turn away from the burden of sin, which clouds our perceptions and weakens our resolve, and find the source of our ultimate happiness in him who is infinite love, infinite freedom, infinite life. “In his will is our peace”. “Real freedom, then, is God's gracious gift, the fruit of conversion to his truth, the truth which makes us free (cf. Jn 8:32). And this freedom in truth brings in its wake a new and liberating way of seeing reality. When we put on “the mind of Christ” (cf. Phil 2:5), new horizons open before us!”

On Evangelization:

“In the light of faith, within the communion of the Church, we also find the inspiration and strength to become a leaven of the Gospel in the world. We become the light of the world, the salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5:13-14), entrusted with the "apostolate" of making our own lives, and the world in which we live, conform ever more fully to God's saving plan.”

“I have come to repeat the Apostle's urgent call to conversion and the forgiveness of sins and to implore from the Lord a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church in this country.

Above all, I urge you to continue to be a leaven of evangelical hope in American society, striving to bring the light and truth of the Gospel to the task of building an ever more just and free world for generations yet to come.”

On Education:

“Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News first and foremost, to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth (cf. Spe Salvi, 4).”

Fidelity to our mission is fidelity to education in the faith.

The words of the Holy Father find echo in the truth of our Cursillo Movement based in its definition. “The Cursillo Movement is a Movement of the Church which by means of its own method makes it possible for people to live what is fundamental for being a Christian, and to live it together; it helps people discover and fulfill their personal vocations, and it promotes the creation of core groups of Christians who leaven their environments with the Gospel. The truth of the Cursillos in Christianity is the Good News; that God loves us; shared by the best means: friendship, which is one of the First Conversations of Cala Figuera, 10 talks of 10 topics to highlight a series of normal ideas on the person, about the freedom, love, friendship, conviction, sincerity, criteria, life, normality and joy that beats in the foundational essence of the Cursillos in Christianity.

The person is the starting point of the inspirational First Conversations of Cala Figuera. The Holy Father alludes to the importance of the person in his World Day of Peace Message for 2008 speaking about the climate change prophets of doom. The Pope's speech underlines his critical point on environmental issues. It is something that Scripture expresses from the very beginning: “Human beings, obviously, are of supreme worth vis-à-vis creation as a whole. Respecting the environments does not mean considering material or animal nature more important than man.” At times this point seems to be lost in debates on the environment. Actually it's not a license to do whatever we want with God's creation. Rather Pope Benedict is reminding us that the summit of His Creation is the human person, and that nature exists to serve man especially those in need.

On Forgiveness:

He met with the victims of the clergy sexual abuse scandal, he publicly said he was ashamed by the scandals and called on all Catholics to “foster healing and reconciliation.” He also asked for love and support to the great many priests who serve the church faithfully in difficult times.

On Unity:

The Holy Father spoke of the unity and the divisions within our church: “It is a time of great promise, as we see the human family in many ways drawing closer together and becoming ever more interdependent. Yet at the same time we see clear signs of a disturbing breakdown in the very foundations of society: signs of alienation, anger, and polarization on the part of many of our contemporaries; increased violence; a weakening of the moral sense; a coarsening of social relations; and a growing forgetfulness of God.” He called on Catholics to strengthen their unity in the apostolic faith and to be rooted in a spirit of conversion and self sacrifice.

On June 28th, 2008, the Holy Father will inaugurate the celebration of the 2,000 anniversary of the birth of St. Paul, a special year focusing on evangelization and in July we will gather for our National Cursillo Encounter in Washington D.C. with the theme “Christ is our Light.” Jesus was the first evangelizer. He came to bring to us the kingdom of his Father, and commissioned us to be the continuators of his mission contained in his teachings, his miracles, his daily encounters with people, and the commission of his disciples. Jesus said “The truth will set you free.” Truth is at the core of our Christian values, and at the core of our Cursillos in Christianity Movement. “The Word became a human being and full of grace and truth lived among us.” (Jn 1:14) The human person entered theology through the main door, Jesus Christ. Our conviction in his truth helps us to center our values on his love and his friendship. He told us “You are my friends if you do what I command you; I do not call you servants because a servant does not know what the master is doing. You are my friends.” (Jn 15:14) Friendship is the means to convey his truth, and our sincere adherence to his Gospel of love will lead us to the criteria of sincere friendship and joy. And this normality is about the fullness of life in the Spirit, fullness of life in Jesus Christ. The leavening of our environments with the Gospel of the love of God is at the core of our 4th day: “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations ...” (Matthew 28:19-20) and some day this mission will take us to enjoy the fruits of our labor eternally in the House of the Lord.

DE COLORES!

THE THREE ENCOUNTERS IN THE THREE-DAY CURSILLO

To illustrate the three encounters in the Three-Day Cursillo, a personal description is used throughout this article. These experiences help to accentuate the three encounters we come upon on a Weekend, and hopefully make connections to our own experiences.

The Encounter With Our Self

We arrive at our Cursillo after a good Precursillo, for some of us, it may have been a simple invitation without a Precursillo (this is not recommended). Many of us arrived intrigued, others perhaps discontent, and some even pushed to attend... What is certain is that we all arrive at the Cursillo with many reservations.

Among other things on that first night of Cursillo, many of us arrived with an attitude of being self sufficient.

With our long faces, we are all gathered in a room where the Rector defines the Cursillo to us as: "the means for the practical solution of all our personal problems." I remember thinking, Wow!

Then he added, “The solution to authentic happiness”. And many of our reactions could have been:

I am happy

I have a good job (good profession)

I have a good spouse

I have wonderful children

I have good health

I have a house, a nice car

I do not need anybody

I am courteous with people

I believe in God, and even pray to Him

I have good moral principles, etc., etc.

And, in three days you are going to teach me to be happy for the rest of my life?

Enthusiasm, devotion, spirit of love; we are asked to keep silence for the rest of the night until the next morning. Then we are invited to move into the Chapel. “Know yourself” said the Spiritual Director. He asked us to really look at ourselves on the inside; he asked us to make a movie of our life from childhood to this very instant of the Cursillo; where have I played the main character, the producer and the director of this movie. "Do not hide nor take anything from it," I'm asked.

We need to stop and take a step back to look at our busy lives. To notice that as our life goes on, our jobs, businesses, materialism, distractions etc., sometimes makes us prisoners of it all.

The Cursillo gives us an opportunity to stop and face ourselves. Who am I? What is the purpose of my existence? Do I feel happy all these years that I have acted like a hero in my life? How has my movie been?

Do you feel proud of the movie made of your own life? Would you dare show it to your spouse, your children or your loved ones? Personally, after a brief review of my movie, I would not dare. In my movie there are very ugly scenes where I have not been honest, where I have not been sincere, where I have not been courteous, where I have abused the confidence of others... there are many dark scenes that I would not even want to see myself.

I meditated on the words of St. Paul, “I want to do the good that is in me, but end up doing the evil that I do not want to do.” I am divided, confused; there is a struggle. The material things attract me. It is imperative to break through this dividing wall. Only then will I be able to find myself. I must put aside my pride and make a way to the light to see what I must improve in me, to see what I must remove, what I must include, and what I must change...

Then comes the meditation on the Prodigal Son; I can relate to him. The merciful Father waits for me to get rid of my present movie and to help me make a new one. I continue being the protagonist, only now I have a new Director and new Producer of my movie.

Should I give myself to the Cursillo, or shouldn't I. My debate continued. After a paused and well reflected “Way of the Cross” and an examination of conscience, I go to bed examining my life-long movie as it was asked of me.

I wake up the next day, arriving at the Chapel a bit confused. "Christ looks at you in different ways," says the spiritual director; "above all with love." I submerge myself in the three characters of the Meditation: "The Three Glances of Christ." As I meditated on each one of the characters I realized, that at times my life is being like the "young rich man" –too attached to the material things; sometimes too ambitious like Judas, and many other times moody, with short temper... like Peter, although open to seek His forgiveness. This starts to give me light again.

In the first rollo, Ideals, a lay person points out that I am the greatest creature in all creation. And then I am asked where do I spend my time and where is my money spent...? The questions bring me again to my old movie; and to my bad memories. It takes me to reflect -Yes, I have much to change in my life!

In the rollo Habitual Grace, my view clears up a great deal, the view of my heart. "If you only knew the gifts of God." Grace makes us saints. The supernatural Life informs and gives the value of eternity to my life, but this poses a change on my part – a metanoia. "If any of you want to come with me, you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me." (Mt 16:24) To be holy is to say no to what displeases God, to sin, to the material things, and to know to say yes to what pleases Him; metanoia –a change of mind and heart.

This "Life" of Grace is as if someone has given me super eyeglasses with power to see the dangers in my life and the means to surpass them. It is going to help me make my "new" movie.

With the Layperson in the Church rollo I could see that we are Church because we form a part of the Mystical Body of Christ, and I have a mission in accomplishing this. Now I'm beginning to see the purpose of my existence: Christ is with us in the world by means of its Church. To be Church is to live the supernatural Life to the fullest, in community.

The Actual Graces will help me in the moments of need. And the palancas -the sacrifices and prayers offered for us in the Cursillo gave us "wings" to fly above the Grace that overflowed in that rollo room.

The Piety rollo removed any doubts I had. It is possible to live a life of holiness; it is possible to live the Life of grace – of love – conscious, growing, and shared in a natural way, joyful, and alive. I see clearer now: God is my Father. Now, without any fear, I can approach and ask him forgiveness, as the Prodigal Son did. The witness of living an authentic life of piety by the rollista gave me strength to make the courageous decision of the necessity to strip myself of my old self and dress myself into the new one which is Christ – metanoia, change.

By the end of the first day I hungered to be a different person. By then, I had a much clearer idea of where I came from and where I'm going. I have discovered a true sense to life. I have been created for greater things; to spend a great deal of my time and my talents in more important things. I am now different, while continuing to be "me." I can begin to do my new movie; with the help of my new Director!

The Encounter With Christ

Having an encounter with ones' self is the vital, necessary foundation for the following two encounters of the Cursillo (the Encounter with Christ, then the Encounter with Others). An encounter with myself makes possible the second encounter: my encounter with Christ.

The Meditation of the next morning, “The person of Christ”, dictates the rhythm for the day. Christ was presented to us as I never had heard. A Christ who is real, alive, personal, a friend, and a brother. The rollo that followed, “Study”, guided us to know Him better. The words of St. Augustine –“That I know myself, Lord, and that I know you Oh Lord!”- was an inspiration to me to connect both encounters. One cannot love what one does not know.

I am the fruit of the love of the Father. I am His child. I am never alone and I was never alone. Now I know that, as the poem entitled *Footprints* states, “*during your time of trials and suffering, when you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.*”

The Sacraments are the channels of the love of the Father. And to prove it to me, the spiritual director invited us to go to the Blessed Sacrament and talk, or in my case vent. When this rollo is presented properly, it is normal to see the candidates seek out the priest for a good confession. At times, many of the ones that had confessed before go and confess after having listened to the beauty of what the Sacraments are.

I found myself with my Father, with my older brother, and my friend. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – three in one. It is not I who lives; it is Christ who lives in me.

Later, by means of the visits to the Blessed Sacrament either by group (decuria) or individually, we had the opportunity to speak with Him again. Although one is feeling good, a normal worry begins to surround us; - what about the others? As the Cursillo continues, the rollos unfold to give us the answer.

The Encounter With Others

We are told that we are militant Christians – that we are called to live the life of an Apostle. Our life as a whole should be an apostolate. Our apostolate cannot be one of something that we do from time to time, when we have the available time. In our Action we employ the best means to reach others with God’s Love: friendship. We learn that before speaking to someone about God we must speak to God about the person. Our friendship with others must be sincere so they may obtain a sincere friendship with Christ. We have to carry out our mission. I remember thinking, either we save ourselves as a group, or we condemn ourselves as a group.

After a great night of sharing, walking to the Chapel in the morning on the third day, the feeling of joy was unexplainable, well, you do understand it. The Meditation again marked the course - It is good that we are here...! You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit. (Jn 15:16)

The joyful environment that exists in this third day sets itself up for the third encounter (An Encounter with Others). One must take advantage of it. The message of the rollos facilitates the Encounter with our brothers and sisters. This day promotes not so much upon the summary of the rollos (this does not imply to take away from the importance of the rollos of this day) but more so in the sharing among the Cursillistas from the other decurias (groups). Therefore, time is provided to sign each others Pilgrims Guide.

The Encounter with Others increases at the Closing, and then in their respective Ultreyas, and each within their respective environments through their fourth day.

The method of perseverance that is presented on this final day of the Weekend perpetuates the treasure of the Grace. The strategy used during the three days has been oriented to the life of Grace; therefore the School of Leaders must accentuate the importance of the third day. These three encounters should be intensified in the Postcursillo.

“The Cursillo Movement is not something, but someone. It is not a thing; rather, it is an organized reality, alive and active, a human reality constituted by the gathering together of men and women who, after having made the Cursillo weekend, adopt the mentality and fundamental principles of the Cursillo Movement. Following its method, they unite themselves to help one another live in a more authentic way the Christian life. In a new way they establish their relationships with God, with themselves, with other people, and with the world; and they make every effort to leaven their environments with the Gospel, so as to enable other people also to respond to the call of God.” (Fundamental Ideas #88)

It is important, to indicate, that these three encounters (Self, Christ, Others) are not only facilitated by means of the message of the rollos but, more by the personal contact and by means of the dialogue in the decurias (groups); there you find the pulse and the affirmation of these encounters.

18th NATIONAL ENCOUNTER

The 18th National Cursillo[®] Encounter will be held at the Catholic University of America, CUA, in Washington, D.C. on July 31 – August 3, 2008. The theme for the 2008 Encounter is: “Christ Is Our Light”. The Encounter will commence on Thursday, July 31, 2008, with the Keynote Address by Most Reverend Francisco González, S.F., and immediately followed by Eucharistic Adoration, Reconciliation, and Benediction in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is within walking distance and we will hold our masses there during the Encounter.

The 18th National Encounter reached its registration capacity of 600 attendees. Registration forms received from this point on will be put on a waiting list, pending any cancellations. **Note:** Check-in on Thursday, July 31st at 2:00 PM, has been changed from Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center to Caldwell Hall. The agenda is attached to this mailing. We invite you to go online at <http://visitors.cua.edu/CUAmap.pdf>, to view a layout of CUA campus.

Please send Palanca for the 18th National Encounter to Sandra Coles-Bell at 7304 Carroll Avenue, #139, Takoma Park, MD 20912. The fax number is 301-891-0741 or you can e-mail your Palanca to Palanca2008Encounter@mac.com

CURSILLO LITERATURE

Revised “*Cursillo, What Is It?*”, Vietnamese #801, is now available for \$1.50. The Spanish version of Reaching Jesus by Fr. David Knight, “*Alcanzando a Jesús*”, #622, is now available for \$7.95. The “*Historia de un Carisma*”, Spanish #235, from the Foundation Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló (FEBA) is now available for \$8.00. Due to price increase of manufacturing materials, the new price of the “*Vertebración de Ideas*”, Spanish #233, is \$6.50, effective June 1, 2008.

CATHOLIC FAITH ENRICHMENT

The National Cursillo® Movement, in partnership with Lighthouse Catholic Media, a division of Saint Joseph Communications, supports the sale of CD's containing 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. Please visit the "Enrich Your Faith" link on the www.natl-cursillo.org site.

NATIONAL CURSILLO GIFT SHOP

The National Cursillo® Gift Shop website, www.nationalcursillogiftshop.com, and the sale of Cursillo related items, are managed by the Center. Please visit the National Cursillo® Gift Shop and browse through the Specials. Your financial support advances the evangelization function of the Movement.

DONATIONS

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

Let's continue to pray and offer Palanca for each other, the 18th National Encounter and the National Cursillo® Movement.

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

18th National Cursillo® Encounter
The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.
July 31 – August 3, 2008

“Christ Is Our Light”

Thursday, July 31, 2008

2:00pm – 6:30pm

All participants check – in at Caldwell Hall

5:00pm – 7:00pm

Dinner – All participants at Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center

7:30pm – 8:00pm

Opening of the 18th National Cursillo® Encounter

All participants at Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

- Opening Blessing and Prayer: National Spiritual Advisor
- Welcome: Lay Director of the Archdiocese of Washington

8:00pm – 8:45pm

Keynote Address – “Christ Is Our Light” – Most Reverend Francisco González, S.F.

All participants at Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

8:45pm – 9:00pm Break

9:00pm – 10:00pm

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Benediction and Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Reconciliation

All participants at Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Friday, August 1, 2008

6:30am – 8:00am

Breakfast – All participants at Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center

8:00am – 8:15am Break

8:15am – 9:00am

Morning Prayers & Meditation

All participants at Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center – Great Room

9:00am – 9:15am Break

9:15am – 11:15am

Major Presentation: Mentality of the Cursillo Movement – Victor Lugo

9:00am – 9:15am Break

9:15am – 11:15am

Major Presentation: The Three Encounters – Ceferino Aguillón

Workshop Session

- Presentation – 30 minutes (presented separately by language)
- Group Discussion – 45 minutes
- Group Report – 45 minutes

11:15am – 11:30am Break

11:30am – 1:30pm

Lunch – Groups are color-coded at Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center

1:30pm – 1:45pm Break

1:45pm – 3:15pm

Workshop Session

A. School of Leaders – Why?

B. Study of the Environment

Jacquelyn DeMesme-Gray

Gail Terrana

- Presentation – 30 minutes (presented separately by language)
- Group Discussion – 45 minutes
- Group Report – 45 minutes

3:15pm – 3:30pm Break

3:30pm – 4:30pm Regional Gathering

4:30pm – 4:45pm Break and prepare for Mass

4:45pm – 5:45pm

Mass – All participants at Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

6:00pm – 8:00pm

Dinner – Groups are color-coded at Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center

8:00pm – 8:30pm Break

8:30pm – 10:00pm

Fiesta – All participants at Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center – Great Room

Sunday, August 3, 2008

6:30am – 8:30am

Breakfast – All participants at Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center

10:00am

All participants need to check out at this time.