



August 2009

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

A REFLECTION ON ST. PAUL AFTER HIS JUBILEE YEAR **"MY GRACE IS ENOUGH FOR YOU"**

By Fr. Einer R. Ochoa, National Spiritual Advisor



The conversion of St. Paul almost two thousand years ago happened in a turbulent environment similar to ours, where divine grace worked in history to consolidate the Christian church in the Gentile world. Jesus exhorts us today in his Gospel to pay attention to the signs of the times. In this present time, the signs of the times reveal our world in a state of spiritual, moral, economic, and social crisis. The same divine grace that sanctified St. Paul and made him fruitful in the task of evangelization, works in us today for our own sanctification and to make us courageous to continue Jesus mission of the salvation of humanity in the frame of a New Advent, a New Pentecost.

The conversion of St. Paul marked the most important moment of his life; because he was linked intimately to the evangelization of the Gentiles. Jesus granted St. Paul a special grace on the road to Damascus, where St. Paul was going to continue the persecution of our Lord's followers. St. Paul heard the words of Jesus, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" St. Paul listened to Jesus' words and followed faithfully his instructions; and after being healed he was baptized and began preaching Jesus as the Son of God. That special grace that St. Paul received on the road to Damascus is what Jesus indicates to him later in life as the answer from St. Paul's complaint of the thorn in the flesh. "As to the extraordinary revelations, in order that I might not become conceited I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and keep me from getting proud. Three times I begged the Lord that this might leave me. He said to me 'My grace is enough for you, for in weakness power reaches perfection.' And so I willingly boast of my weaknesses instead, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." 2 Cor 12:7b-10. This grace of divine mercy accompanied St. Paul and made him strong and fruitful in the evangelization of the Gentiles.

In the history of creation the infinite love of God is manifested in a special way through his mercy. Adam and Eve received the promise of a Savior instead of the severity of his justice. God promised to intervene in a personal way which would unite us intimately to Him for all eternity. Instead of condemnation God gives us salvation, instead of punishment we are given hope, instead of death we are offered life in abundance. In an act of compassionate love, God corresponds to our sinfulness with his abundant and amazing grace.

St. Paul, a sinner and persecutor of the church as he admits, says that he is thankful to God for the free gift of divine mercy given to him "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened

me, that he has made me his servant and judge me faithful. I was once a blasphemer, a persecutor, a man filled with arrogance; but because I did not know what I was doing in my unbelief, I have been treated mercifully, and the grace of our Lord has been granted me in overflowing measure, along with the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” Tim 1:12-14. This love made St. Paul powerful in his preaching that he supported with the testimony of his sufferings.

The sufferings of St. Paul were numerous, but because of divine grace they became the source of strength and redeeming love that produced extraordinary evangelistic feats. “Now I want you to know brothers that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel.” Phil 1:12-13. “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” Gal 2:20a. “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” Rom 8:18. “Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.” Col 1:24.

Love for the church moved St. Paul to live the Gospel and be able to give practical and truthful answers to the brothers and sisters of good will that he evangelized, and who were added to the number of converts. This situation brings to mind the words of Pope Benedict XVI “The Gospel has to be preached and taught as an integral way of life, offering an attractive and true answer intellectually and practically, to real human problems.”

In preaching the Gospel and sharing the love of God with others along our Fourth Day, Divine grace nurtures our piety, which is the most important leg of our personal tripod, because from our Piety, Study and Action depend. This grace equips us with the friendship and the power of God expressed in the sacramental and mystical life of the church, makes us witnesses of his love, helps us to grow in holiness, and takes us by the hand at the service of the people of God. St. Paul, Patron of our Cursillos of Christianity, gives us practical advice in this regard. He counsels us to put on the full armor that God has given us to be firm against the schemes of the evil one: “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Eph 6:11, 14-17. Then we will be able to say: “Yet when I preach the Gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel.” 1 Cor 9:16.

Preaching to be effective has to be supported by prayer. Prayer is a frequent topic in St. Paul’s letters. He exhorts us to imitate him: “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given to me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.” Eph 6:18-20. “And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ.” Phil 1:9-10. Love is what St. Paul prayed for and what was most important to him, “And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.” 1 Cor 13.

As an expert in the knowledge of the human heart, St. Paul is the teacher and counselor of love par excellence: “Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in

which you shine like stars in the universe.” Phil 2:14-15. “Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all.” Phil 4:4-5a. “Set your heart on things above” Col 3:1b. “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. An over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Wives submit to your husbands, as fitting in the Lord. Husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.” Col 3:12-21. “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders: make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Col 4:5-6. “Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.” Gal 5:26. “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” II Tes 3:10b. “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.” Gal 6:1a. “In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Eph 4:26, 27, 31, 32. St. Paul cooperated with God In the evangelization of the Gentiles by being faithful until the end. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” 2 Tim 4:7.

As God worked in St. Paul for the evangelization of the Gentiles, he tells us that he who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ. Phil 1:6. This good work is none other than the holiness that God has called us to. Our Piety’s aim is our holiness and in our piety we have five practical components to go fast on the road to holiness: monthly confession, daily Mass and communion, daily adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, daily rosary as devotion to the Blessed Mother, and devotion to the saints.

Lastly St. Paul encourages us with his exemplary and deep piety: “For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Eph 3:14-19.

The fullness of God that worked powerfully in St. Paul through divine grace works in us in the same way and moves us to become the leaven of the church, salt and light of the world, living presence of God on earth, and hope of the nations in a New Advent!, a New Pentecost!

DE COLORES!

LEADERSHIP IN THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

As many of us were spiritually and emotionally elated after attending our 19th National Cursillo Encounter in San Bernardino, and our exuberant World Ultreya in Anaheim Convention Center, in California, USA, we have felt greatly enlightened in our Cursillo Movement and our morale has been uplifted with much enthusiasm and gratitude to the Holy Spirit with His wonderful gift of our Cursillo Movement to the Church through Eduardo Bonnín's foundational charism.

Even though feeling excited and optimistic about our Cursillo Movement, we need to stop, once in a while, in order to look back on our Fourth Day journey and evaluate the steps we take towards the mission of our Movement and of the Church. There is always a need of encouragement as well as room for improvement. The small participation of the current diocesan and regional Cursillo leaders at our annual National Encounters shows little commitment in our Cursillo leadership. We should be honest enough to admit that there is a serious shortage of knowledgeable and committed leaders, who are eager to join the School of Leaders, to serve on the Diocesan Secretariats, and on the Regional Service Teams. Some leaders, therefore, can hardly find their replacements. We do not feel pessimistic about this situation, but on the contrary, we should confidently face this challenge and prayerfully work for the changes!

The most practical and straightforward book about the Cursillo leadership is "Whom Shall I Send?" by Father Frank S. Salmani. This book is very helpful for Cursillo leaders, already translated into Spanish and Vietnamese. The present and prospective Cursillo leaders would benefit greatly if they read and studied it carefully and thoroughly before they make up their minds whether or not to serve the Movement in any capacity at any levels. This learning material is indispensable to the formation of Cursillo leaders and is strongly recommended for study in our School of Leaders. The book has nineteen chapters with specific topics supported by references of the Holy Scripture Readings, and each chapter is followed by Chapter Summary and Questions For Reflection/Discussion. Please check it out at our National Cursillo® Center, Tel. # 214-339-6321 or www.natl-cursillo.org

The Cursillo Leaders and Their Responsibilities

Discerning the Lord's Call

In the meditation "The Selection of the Twelve", Magnificat July 8th, 2009, Father André Louf, O.C.S.O., wrote: "Jesus called to him those he himself wanted. The selection, accordingly, does not come from the side of those called; it proceeds in the first place from Jesus himself. It is he who wants them or does not want them, an expression which clearly indicates that in this selection Jesus enjoys supreme freedom. A person was simply selected because Jesus preferred him, without any further motives. At the moment of selection what matters is not what these people are. He simply prefers them because he loves them, each one individually. Nothing other than Jesus' love and preference explains this selection."

Fr. Frank S. Salmani in the Epilogue of his book stated that if we decide our particular calling is to the Cursillo Movement as a Cursillo leader, we must understand that this calling, like any calling from God is a vocation – it is not something we choose. The Lord chooses us. Accepting that call means making a commitment to God and His work. It involves directing our will to all that God wants. It means that we must be responsible stewards, sharing our time, talent and treasure with the world. If we accept the task of being a Cursillo leader, it also implies that this

should be our primary apostolate. Not everyone is called to do everything. We are not called to do everything, but whatever challenge we do accept should be given our undivided attention. Jesus' command to his followers "Go and make disciples of all nations!" encouraged them to go out and not only spread the Good News, but to literally recruit others to continue to spread the message, to find other disciples, "students" of the Gospel that would continue the work of the first apostles. Jesus does not ask everyone to embrace the same call. He calls all to accept the Gospel, and by baptism, to be disciples, students of Jesus Christ, but He calls certain people to be leaders to help others accept the call. Some are called to lead others. They are Cursillistas who are willing to walk an extra mile for Jesus, to serve on the Secretariat, in the Pre-Cursillo, on the Cursillo Weekend, on the Post-Cursillo as Ultreya leaders and in the School of Leaders. They believe that the Cursillo is a gift of God given to them, and they must share the fruits of this gift with the world. This new life they share in Christ cannot be kept to themselves. They have an obligation to give glory and praise to God for all He has shared with them. According to Fr. Salmani's advice, as Cursillo leaders, we can renew our communities by offering our time, talent and treasures to help further the Kingdom of God. The basis of stewardship lies in the idea of the covenant. God has promised that He would be with us at all times and provide for all our needs. In a spirit of gratitude, we have a moral obligation to give back to God something in return. If we examine the principles of stewardship, we will easily see how the call to be leaders and the call to be good stewards are one and the same.

All of us are called to embrace our Fourth Day fully, but some are called to do the special work of the Cursillo Movement. Not everyone will be called to the School of Leaders. We can never water down the principles of the Cursillo or the School of Leaders out of fear that it will not be for everyone. So how do we discern where God wants us to be? The answer is simple – through prayer.

Ongoing Conversion and Learning

Ongoing conversion is essential for the Cursillo. Our life of Piety, Study and Action is essential to our living out our Fourth Day. Without this three-fold dimension of the Christian life, the Christian life is lacking. Group Reunion and Ultreya are also essential for Cursillistas because these help to sustain and support their three-fold life in Christ. Part of this ongoing conversion is a continual commitment to service, to each other and to the work of the Cursillo, which is the work of Christ and His Church.

Fr. Salmani concluded his Chapter on Prayer as "Communion" with God: Our work is a call from God and the ongoing work will feed ongoing prayer that will help in our progressive conversion. Work and prayer are interwoven just as the vertical (God) and horizontal (others) dimension of our spiritual life are interwoven. If we accept the call as a Cursillo leader, prayer and study will be the fuel for the work of the Movement. It is not enough to be filled spiritually. We need Christians who are leaders not because they are spiritually advanced, but leaders who are willing to set standards for Christian service to the Cursillo, the Church and the world.

In addition to their ongoing conversion through their constant communion with God, Cursillo leaders seek 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. Annual National Cursillo® Encounters, Regional gatherings in the Spring and in the Fall each year and a variety of leadership workshops, Cursillo de Cursillos, for example, made available at the diocesan and regional levels are good opportunities for the present and future

Cursillo leaders to increase their knowledge about our Movement in order to serve their Cursillistas effectively. I have heard this stern but impressive statement of some leaders: “It is better for the Cursillo Movement to remain dormant than to be run by unknowledgeable and uncommitted leaders.”

Promoting the Foundational Charism and Authenticity of the Cursillo Movement

Mr. Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló himself, in his most recently published book entitled “My Spiritual Testament”, 2009, wrote about the true authorship of the Cursillo: “Whenever I have been asked who was the author of everything about Cursillo I have said categorically that it was the Holy Spirit, but when they asked me who made up the structure, who collected the anecdotes, who structured the lay Rollos, who devised the Group Reunion and the Ultreya, so as to avoid lying I have had to say that it was me”.

The Cursillo Movement is God’s gift to us and to the Church. The Spirit gave us this Movement with its method. We have no right to tamper with it. The Cursillo did not invent what is fundamental to being Christian. We are simply carrying on the mission of Christ, which is now the mission of the Church.

Fr. Salmani reminds us that the mentality of the Cursillo deals with those elements that are essential to the Cursillo, those things that distinguish the Cursillo from other movements within the Church and give the Cursillo its unique identity. I feel that we have added ideas and adaptations that are not in line with the foundational charism. This is evident by Mr. Bonnín’s quotation from his book ‘My Spiritual Testament’: “If we compare the Cursillo Movement to a tree, we are happy to see that it has grown, because the evangelical seed sown in many hearts and cultivated with prayer has given its fruit; but it also hurts us to see that in some places, no doubt with the best of intentions, they have taken the tree of the Cursillos for the Christmas tree and have been hanging lights and decorations (their favorite ideas) and have gradually been spoiling its clear and simple process.....” He continues with yet more adaptations that have been added to Cursillo as he quotes, “There are other oddities occurring on the last day before the closing ceremony: in some places a special meal is prepared which they call “agape”. Elsewhere a handful of letters are delivered to each of the new Cursillistas from senders unknown to him or her, in which he or she is congratulated on having had the experience of a Cursillo Weekend. These letters have been written at the suggestion of the leaders in order to encourage the new Cursillistas. Upon receiving them, of course, they can be nothing but surprised, which distracts them to the point of having them pay more attention to the letters than to the clausura.” And he points out yet another addition: “At the end of the Weekend, the leaders wash the feet of the new Cursillistas..... ” All these quotes are taken from Mr. Bonnín’s book under the chapter title “About Weaknesses of the Cursillos”.

First and foremost is God’s love for us. Without this God of love, there is no Cursillo. Without our friendship with Jesus and others, there is no authentic Christian life. The Cursillo without virtuous friendship is certainly NOT authentic Cursillo. St. Thomas Aquinas, in his ‘Summa Theologica’, gave this sweeping assertion on why a person needs friends, “For in order that man may do well, whether in the works of the active life, or in those of the contemplative life, he needs the fellowship of friends” (Epilogue: Friendship: The Art of Happiness, by John Cuddeback, 2003).

We are called to a life of authenticity. Without authenticity, everything we say or do is a sham. We must believe what we live and live what we believe. If we do not walk the talk, then we pay

lip service to Christ and the purpose of the Cursillo. If we say that the Cursillo is our primary apostolate, then it must be primary. It cannot be simply a hobby when it fits into our busy schedule. Whatever we commit to Christ should be given all of our efforts.

The Temptations Faced by Cursillo Leaders

The example of humility Jesus shows us (washing the apostles' feet) is a reminder that the first thing a leader must do is get rid of all ambition and the lust for power. When we speak of being a leader for Christ, the issue is not one of control, but of service, responsibility and accountability.

As Christian leaders and as Cursillo leaders, we must be concerned about upholding what is right and not be concerned with keeping our position intact. Christian leaders need to make the tough decisions, even when they are not popular. Within the Cursillo Movement, Lay Directors, Spiritual Advisors, Secretariat members are called to stand on the truth, whether it is popular or not, whether it threatens their 'job security' or not.

True disciples of Jesus must understand that they are not indispensable. Christianity, the Church, the Cursillo Movement do not rise or fall based on their leaders' performance. All too often leaders are ineffective because they spend more time focusing on the power and authority they either have or seek than they do concentrating on doing the job at hand. All Cursillistas have an important role to bring the world to Christ, regardless what their official 'title' might be or not be.

Too many Cursillistas focus more on the Weekend than on doing the work of evangelization. Yet, a Cursillista could be doing great work for the Movement without ever having to be on the Weekend team. The purpose of being a Cursillo leader is not to be on the Weekend team, but to lead other Cursillistas in their task to continue the apostolic mission begun by Jesus and the Twelve. One of the reasons our Pre-Cursillo and Post-Cursillo is often weak is because all our energy is put on the Weekend. The Weekend is only one part of the job, and in the broader scheme of things, the Weekend is the least important part of the Cursillo – it is simply a means to get people from the Pre-Cursillo to the Post-Cursillo.

In our consumerist society we have become obsessed with the need to see results in everything we do. It is a great temptation to get discouraged because things are not moving fast enough or we see no visible results. In our apostolic work we want to give up because we have so many failures. The only thing that is essential in this regard is that we do our work for Christ, whether or not we see noticeable results.

Related to the issue of successes and failures is the concern over numbers. We are concerned about filling Weekends, the size of our School of Leaders, the number of people attending Ultreya. Again numbers are incidental. In a School of Leaders it is better to have ten leaders committed to the work of the Cursillo than a School of thirty people, with the same ten still carrying the load. Bodies are not all important. Bodies without commitment accomplishes nothing. The purpose of Ultreya is not to fill halls with Cursillistas, but make Ultreya available.

If we are called to do God's work it should make no difference who is in authority. The apostolate is still the apostolate, regardless of the Lay Director or Spiritual Advisor, the Secretariat or anyone else. On Weekends we want to put our 'friends' on the team with us, whether or not they have an authentic witness. Our vocation is given to us by Christ through

baptism, not by some individual leader. All of us are called to be servants of Christ, no matter what position of authority we have or do not have. Finally, Father Salmani reminds us that no one person is so essential that the community cannot survive without him or her. This is a familiar malady that we all know from parish experience. People follow a certain priest and after he is transferred, there is a new 'clique' with the new priest. This is why communities do not stay strong. No one person is so invaluable that everything we do rests on that one person's presence.

Conclusion

Father Henri J. M. Nouwen, in his book "In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership", shared his vision about a new Christian leadership as follows: "Beneath all the great accomplishments of our time there is a deep current of despair. While efficiency and control are the great aspirations of our society, the loneliness, isolation, lack of friendship and intimacy, broken relationships, boredom, feelings of emptiness and depression, and a deep sense of uselessness fill the hearts of millions of people in our success-oriented world. ... It is here that the need for a new Christian leadership becomes clear. The leaders of the future will be those who dare to claim their irrelevance in the contemporary world as a divine vocation that allows them to enter into a deep solidarity with the anguish underlying all the glitter of success, and to bring the light of Jesus there." This reminds me of this anonymous saying, "We shall have to repent in this generation, not so much for the evil deeds of the wicked people, but for the appalling silence of the good people." St. Paul, the Patron of our Cursillo Movement, reassured all Christian leaders in his second letter to the Corinthians, "I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor.12:7-10).

THE 19th NATIONAL CURSILLO[®] ENCOUNTER

The 19th National Cursillo[®] Encounter at CSUSB (California State University at San Bernardino) started Thursday afternoon, July 30, 2009 as over 650 members of the National Cursillo[®] Movement arrived from as far west as Hawaii, as far north as Canada, and as far east as Miami, Florida. There was much joy as friends from previous Encounters greeted each other. First time Cursillistas attendees also felt the warmth and love that is evident when Cursillistas gather.

The Encounter opened Thursday evening, with an Opening Blessing and comments given by Cursillo's National Episcopal Advisor, Most Reverend Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S. His love of Cursillo, his deep faith, and his gift for speaking and touching hearts was felt by all.



The evening's Keynote Address, "The Conversion of St. Paul", was delivered by Alejandro Garcia-Rivera, Ph.D. He referred to the painting on the screens of the Conversion-of-St-Paul, by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. The painting shows Saul thrown to the ground by his encounter with Christ, his arms outstretched, helpless as a child, wanting only to be open to the Lord. Dr. Rivera said that we also must be truly helpless before the Lord, if we are to experience our own radical conversion. Dr. Rivera shared his life story of a radical conversion of going from a nuclear physicist to a Catholic theologian, including his coming to U.S. from Cuba. It is a story of many changes, decisions, and

steps over time, realizing that he was being directed by God. Dr. Rivera reminded us that God writes straight with crooked lines.

After the Keynote Address, the Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was led by Rev. Einer R. Ochoa. Reconciliation was made available by the many Cursillistas priests attending the Encounter. The evening ended with Benediction and Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Night Prayers.

Friday morning opened with Morning Prayers. Then the first rollo, “Piety”, was given. The rollo told us that God loved us first. That He loves us as we are – broken and doing the right things for the wrong reason. That His Love is the absolute in us that we have always been searching for. It is the only thing that completes us as a person. The rollo told us that true Piety is responding to the love that God has for us. That the ability to love God is a Grace, a gift from Him. That without this Grace, we are incapable of loving Him. By this Grace, Christ is incarnated in us and is able to operate through us, with us and in us. Thus we take Christ with us wherever we go, and can truly give love – not ours but God’s. The rollo told us that a life of true Piety can happen only if we have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. It is as Saint Paul said “It is no longer me, but Christ who lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20).

True Piety enables us to be able to honestly share with each other and sincerely participate in pious actions such as daily mass and communion, adoration, daily rosary, and devotion to the saints.

The rollo told us that Piety is the most important leg of our internal tripod, because only if we love Jesus through true piety, we will be able to get to know Him better through study, and our actions be able to truly be a reflection of Christ in us. Doing pious things without the unconditional love of Christ in us is false piety. The rollo was followed by Small Group Discussion and then shared with the whole group.

Friday morning’s rollo was followed by Mass. Bishop Elizondo’s homily inspired all with the story of a pious woman who wanted to be buried with a fork in her hands instead of the rosary since she had heard all her life to save her fork for dessert, because “the best is yet to come” – that we too must always remember that eternity with God will, by far, be the best yet to come! The homily also reminded us that all that we do for the Lord is not easy, that, “to win the lottery, we must buy a ticket”. That each day we must serve him no matter what. The music and singing provided by the choir from the San Bernardino Cursillo Community at Mass and throughout the Encounter was wonderful.

Friday afternoon we had our second major rollo on “Study”. Cursillo presents the concept of study in a new dimension. Study cannot be an accidental browsing of a Catholic newspaper or book, not even to read a good book, but to read and study the books that will do us the most good at this particular moment in our life as a Christian. Cursillo defines Christian study to mean the progressive search for the meaning of life itself, the most basic question of humanity. Study calls for the person to be open to: God - to know where He speaks and what He is telling us; to ourselves - to know ourselves better and bring about a constant interior renewal; and to the world - to know and concern ourselves with our brothers’ and sisters’ situations. These are the same three encounters we experience on the Cursillo weekend. Study can offer us, through more and better information, a greater formation, that is, – a Christian form – which will reform our mentality, conforming our life to God’s plan, and transforming everything around us, while

animating everything with a Christian spirit. The rollo reminded us that what we study is based on our ideal. If we claim that God is our ideal, then His way, His truth, His life must be the subject of our study. Even though some people may go through life with little or no interest in the things of God, He calls us to walk with Him and to see our potential. God still calls man to seek him, and every person must search for God with his intellect, his will and with 'an upright heart.' "You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you" (St. Augustine).

After a full day of deep, provocative, and inspirational rollos and discussion, our minds and hearts were full of joy and the Lord. Thus it was the perfect time for the music dancing, and skits of Friday's Fiesta! The joy of the Lord was felt in every presentation by the different language and culture groups of the Cursillistas attending the Encounter. Night prayers concluded the day. As we walked to our dorms, most were thinking about the next day's events, including the trip to Anaheim, Ca to attend the IV World Ultreya!

As we gathered for Saturday morning prayers everyone was talking about the minor earthquake around 6:15AM! Welcome to California! We continued the encounter with the third major rollo on "Action". The rollo told us that Action is the perfection of our Piety, doing what Christ is calling us to do. The rollo reminded us that on our Cursillo Weekend, we encounter the deep, penetrating Love of Jesus and are filled with a burning desire to action for Him. The rollo told us that we need to carefully discern, what specifically the Lord is calling us to do, to not just be doing lots of 'good' things, so that our action will truly be 'apostolic' action, not just 'good' action. The rollo told us that Action, not rooted in the deep penetrating love of Christ, can not be truly effective over time, because it comes from us, not the Lord. We were told that we must examine the Action we are currently doing to discover what is truly motivating it? Does it come from a heart full of the love of Christ for the persons we are serving by our Action? Our Action can be improved if we reflect God and the Good News. Apostolic Action is more about being than doing. We must be Christ; we must be intimately connected with Him and His Will for us, before we 'do' for Him. We can't give away what we don't have. If we pray deeply to see each person as Christ sees them, in our homes and other environments, then we will truly love them and thus be able to allow God's work to be done.

After the small group discussion and reports to the whole group, it was time to board the buses for the hour drive to the Anaheim Convention Center Arena for the IV World Ultreya held by OMCC (World Organization of Cursillos of Christianity). The 1st World Ultreya had been in Rome in 1966, the 2nd in Mexico City in 1970 and the 3rd, again in Rome, in 2000. Now it was happening here in the U.S.!

At the Anaheim Convention Center Arena, we joined over 5000 other brother and sister Cursillistas from around the world. Everyone was filled with enthusiasm and love for God. At the same time, it was so peaceful.

The Keynote speaker was Dr. Guzman Carriquiry Lecour. Dr. Lecour has served on the Pontifical Council of the Laity for thirty-five years, working with Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, and now Pope Benedict XVI. His responsibilities include recognizing the many lay associations, ecclesial communities, and movements in the Church.

A few selected points from Dr. Lecour's Keynote Address follow:

“ ‘Anyone who has found something true, beautiful and good in his life – the real treasure, the pearl of great price – is to share it everywhere, at home and at work in all areas of their lives.’ This was acknowledged by Pope Benedict XVI in his homily on June 3, 2006. So a few days earlier, in his message of May 22, he urged the movements to bring ‘Christ’s light to all the social and cultural milieus in which you live’ noting that, ‘Missionary zeal is proof of a radical experience of ever renewed fidelity to one’s charism that surpasses any kind of weary or selfish withdrawal.’”

“We must always rediscover the Church as sacrament rooted in the Trinitarian life, which ‘means’ for the whole world the mystery of salvific design, reveals the pilgrim nature of God’s people present in history as the epiphany of the inexhaustible novelty and contemporaneity of the Body of Christ. It is embraced above all as a gift, in all the density and beauty of its mystery, in all its constituent factors. It is not “ours”, it is God’s”

“Ultreya, friends! It seems that this greeting and exclamation mean ‘beyond’. The grace of the Lord takes us beyond our limits, enlightens our intelligence with the ‘beyond’ of faith and leads us beyond our own programs and plans, inviting us to be witnesses and missionaries, always beyond all confines and awaits us beyond history, in its eternal abode. Ultreya, Cursillistas friends!”

A highlight of the amazing Ultreya was the small Group Reunion among the over 5000 attendees. We were told to group with a group of 4-5 persons that would especially include persons you did not know. It was a powerful 30 minutes to share among a few new friends, our faith journey. As we shared, we could look around the arena and see literally thousands of other Cursillistas doing the same!

The music breaks scheduled between the opening talks, the group reunion and the witness talks were filled with enthusiastic singing, people clapping, dancing and waving flags. Our Christian community’s overpoweringly joyful, festive mood showed itself greatly!

Eight (8) witnesses, representing different ages, languages and culture groups, were given. The talks were translated in English and Spanish in the Ultreya program. Each witness reflected a strong evidence of God working in each life, not in dramatic, emotional ways, but very powerful. Perhaps even more powerful since they reflect normal, everyday life walked in touch with God. One witness spoke of the legacy of palanca that we have given and received throughout our lives. She pointed to some empty seats and said that these seats are not empty but are filled with the Cursillistas and people who have prayed for us who have gone before us! Who are with us still!

At 9:00 PM, we boarded the buses back to San Bernardino. Arriving back at CSUSB, it was somewhat sad to realize that the wonderful past few days surrounded by the shining faith, joy and friendship of being with brothers and sisters in Christ would be ending at breakfast on Sunday, as we each would be leaving to head home. But the faith, joy and friendship continues as we journey together through Christ, in Christ and with Christ!

DeColores!

THE 20th NATIONAL CURSILLO[®] ENCOUNTER

Make plans to attend the 20th National Cursillo[®] Encounter, to be held Thursday, July 29 – Sunday, August 1, 2010, at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri. Additional information will be available on our next mailing.

CURSILLO LITERATURE

- “*My Spiritual Testament*”, English #116, by Eduardo Bonnín, new from the Foundation Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló (FEBA), is available for \$8.00;
- “*Mi Testamento Espiritual*”, Spanish #217, by Eduardo Bonnín, new from the Foundation Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló (FEBA), is available for \$8.00;
- “*Historia de un Carisma*”, Spanish #235, from the Foundation Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló (FEBA), is available for \$8.00;
- “*Vertebración De Ideas*”, Spanish #233, from Foundation Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló (FEBA), is available for \$8.00;
- “*Los Orígenes Mallorquines de los Cursillos de Cristiandad en EE.UU.*”, Spanish #236, by Bernardo Vadell, Rector of the first Cursillo in the USA, is available for \$8.00;
- “*Temas sobre el Carisma e Ideas Fundacionales*”, Spanish #237, is a new book now available for \$8.00;
- “*Sponsor’s Booklet*”, revised Vietnamese version #800, is available for \$1.50

CATHOLIC FAITH ENRICHMENT

The National Cursillo[®] Movement continues the partnership with Lighthouse Catholic Media, a division of Saint Joseph Communications. The details are posted on the www.natl-cursillo.org.

NATIONAL CURSILLO[®] GIFT SHOP

The National Cursillo[®] Gift Shop website, www.nationalcursillogiftshop.com, and the sale of Cursillo related items contribute to the financial support of the National Cursillo[®] 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.

NATIONAL CURSILLO[®] CENTER

The National Cursillo[®] Center will close for the Labor Day holiday, Monday, September 7, 2009, and will re-open on Tuesday, September 8, 2009, at 9:00 AM (CST). Please plan your book orders accordingly.

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 and NACG Executive Committee

Let's continue to pray and offer palanca for each other and the National Cursillo[®] Movement.

Your brothers in Christ,

Victor Lugo – National Executive Director

Ceferino Aguillón, Jr. – National English Language Coordinator

Jorge Barceló – National Spanish Language Coordinator

Joachim Le – National Vietnamese Language Coordinator