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FOUNDATIONAL CHARISM OF THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

The United States National Cursillo Movement would like to continue to enlighten you on the foundational charism of the Cursillo Movement. The National Staff has researched some materials that will help us better comprehend the origin of the Cursillo Movement.

Eduardo Bonnin: "The Founder":

In the book "The Origins and Development of Cursillo" by Fr. Ivan J. Rohloff on the introduction (Page 1),

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LET'S GIVE THANKS TO GOD!

In the first week of November, in an issue of the Italian Bishops Conference daily newspaper, "Avvenire", Sandro Magister wrote about Cardinal Kazimierz Swiatek, now nearly 90 years old, Archbishop of Minsk-Mohilev in Belarus, "In 1994, when making him cardinal, Pope John Paul II made a gesture of great significance: The Church of the martyrs is not only made up of saints in heaven, but of men of tremendous valor here on earth. They are those

species of men and women hailing from regions that the rest of the world – even Catholics – regard with indifference. Besides Swiatek, there was another Wojtylian cardinal from the same background: Vietnamese Archbishop-Coadjutor of Saigon, Francis-Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, who spent 13 years in incarceration following the "liberation" of his country. He died in 2002 while in exile in Rome. Even his biography echoes the writings of Solgenitsin and the acts of the first

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THE 67TH ANNUAL NATIONAL SECRETARIAT, FALL 2003 MEETING

The 67th Annual National Secretariat Fall 2003 Meeting was held in Dallas, Texas, from Friday, Nov. 14 at 3:30 PM to Saturday, Nov. 15, 2003, at 11:00 PM. The Executive Committee Members and the National Episcopal Advisor, Bishop James Tamayo, arrived one day earlier to meet with the National Staff to review the meeting agenda and prepare for the Meeting.

There were 29 regional coordinators (English, Portuguese, Spanish and Vietnamese) in attendance with Bishop Tamayo, Fr. Pedro Garcia, National Spiritual Advisor, Tom Ford, the National Treasurer, and three National Coordinators (Jorge Barcelo, acting Interim National Executive Director, Victor Lugo and Joachim Le). Only 2 Regional Coordinators were absent: Anthony Long Nguyen, Region 7 – Vietnamese & Paul Lee, Region 2 – Korean.

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CURSILLO TRIPOD

- PIETY → HOLINESS
- STUDY → FORMATION
- ACTION → EVANGELIZATION

last sentence of the 2nd paragraph states clearly about the founders, “...the leadership of Eduardo Bonnin and Gabriel Segui gave birth to the ‘Cursillos de Cristiandad’.” Then the last sentence of paragraph 4th reads as follows: “Meanwhile Eduardo Bonnin continued to direct an unofficial Cursillo Movement on the Island, which, without the bishop’s blessing, maintained the original Cursillo genius”.

Fr. Ivan also clarifies and eliminates the possibilities of Bishop Hervas and Fr. Juan Capo as being founders, stating: “Since the movement dates from the mid-forties, it is not the creation of Juan Hervas (1904-) and Juan Capo (1923-) as is sometimes stated. These men were not yet in Mallorca during the earliest stages of the formation of Cursillo.” (Pg. 26, 4th paragraph)

So, why didn’t Eduardo speak before? The answer is also in the same book, page 4, fifth paragraph states : “Serious historical study of the movement has been delayed because the most valuable historical evidence has to be obtained from archives of Eduardo Bonnin, whose account of the history is not accepted by the National Cursillo office of Spain. Eduardo Bonnin does not feel that he enjoys the freedom to write the real history of the movement, but he is very concerned that it be done.”

Spain does not accept Eduardo’s historical events because they want to be the protagonist, the “founders”. Eduardo, as he states

it here did not want to write the real history (about himself) although others are doing it and calling themselves “founders”. This is why he is “coming out to say it now”; in fact, he has been saying it for over ten years.



Although Eduardo does not mind who takes credit for being the founder, he does care that we stay faithful to the Foundational Charism. We are not the only ones who call Eduardo the founder, the Vatican recognizes this fact in a recent book entitled “Signos de Esperanza – Retrato de siete Movimientos eclesiales” – Presentacion de Juan Pablo II (Signs of Hope- Picture of seven Eclesial Movements) Presentation of Pope John Paul II). This book, written by Bishop Paul Josef Cordes who was the Vice-President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity through 1995, presents Eduardo Bonnin as “the Founder” of the Cursillo Movement (Pages 52-71). There is so much literature with the “real history”, but unfortunately

only available in Spanish at this time. We are diligently working on translating some of this literature into English, for example:

1. “Historia y Memoria de Cursillos” (History and Memory of Cursillos) by Francisco Forteza – 1992. It is not just a history but also a thorough investigation of the facts right from the beginning.
2. 1st Conversations of Cala Figuera, 1994 . Our 2003 National Encounter was based on them.
3. Volviendo a las Fuentes (Returning to the Origins), 1997 - Alberto Monteagudo
4. Historia de los Cursillos – Another book about the real and complete History of the Movement
5. Signos de Esperanza – Retrato de siete Movimientos Eclesiales (Signs of Hope- Picture of seven Eclesial Movements) Present Eduardo Bonnin to Pope John Paul II as “the Founder” – 1998
6. Eduardo Bonnin: Un Aprendiz de Cristiano, 2001 (E.Bonnin: an Apprentice of a Christian) His biography with a history in his own words (the words that he was not able to say back then)
7. Historia de un Carisma , 2003 (History of a Charism) (documented).

As more and more literature of the Cursillo Movement has become available (primarily in Spanish), the majority of the national leadership has experienced an evolution in the understanding of the Cursillo Movement exactly the

same as what was expressed by Tom Sarg in the August, 2003 National Mailing.

Why has this information become available now? Why has more emphasis been placed on the role of Eduardo Bonnin in receiving the Foundational Charism? In "Historia de Un Carisma"(p.13), Eduardo states: *"It is not through a desire to be recognized as the lead player, but rather in the service of the truth and to clarify concepts and events, that we (Secretariat of Mallorca) have found it opportune to make available to people interested in the Cursillo Movement, what occurred in the beginning, and in this light to make it clearer, always counting on the grace of God, we have tried to be faithful to the intention with which the Cursillos were proposed, prayed, reflected, structured, and for which we give thanks!"*

The Mallorcans and many of the world Cursillo leaders repeatedly pleaded with Eduardo until he shared his understanding in order to preserve the Foundational Charism, while he was still able to do so.

Gabriel Segui, "the movement's historian" as quoted in Ivan's book (pg. 4), made public his manuscript of the "Origenes de los Cursillos de Cristiandad, 1941-1949 (Origins of the Cursillos in Christianity) as requested in 1965 by Pope Paul VI to Hervas. This manuscript was presented to the Vatican in 1967 (we can see that this is not



just something recent) by Bishop Hervas and it was also published in the book "Volviendo a las Fuentes" (Returning to the Origins) by Alberto Monteagudo, pages 271-315. Here are some of his points:

#63 "The essential structures of Cursillo can be considered already very well set in the year 1944... in August of the same year in Cala Figuera de Felanitx (Mallorca) was the 1st Cursillo in Christianity."

#71 "The essential structures of the new form of Cursillos were clearly fixed by 1944. Without a doubt, the 1st Cursillo carried out in this new style (3 1/2 days, and not specifically as a preparation for the 1948 National Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela) was the one that took place between August 19-23, 1944 in Cala Figuera) This judgment is based on items from the Bulletin and from some of the young who participated."

#72 "In this Cursillo we find all the structures of the future Cursillos. They began with a retreat day, the 20 young men were divided into 2 decurias (tables of 10) to motivate each other to achieve the 3 ideals of Catholic Action: Piety, Study, and Action. They presented poster, followed by an exchange of impressions. There was an atmosphere of a frank and youthful

joy. This Cursillo ended with a solemn closing, in which the young cursillistas, the President of Young Men's Catholic Action and the diocesan spiritual director participated. Fr. Juan Julia was in charge of the spiritual direction and dogmatic formation of these youths."

"These selected youths (all of whom had been presidents of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Action, Jose Ferragut, Eduardo Bonnin and Jaime Ruitort, did presentations on the themes that today are the rollos of the Cursillos in Christianity. Eduardo Bonnin was rector of that Cursillo. That the Cursillo Movement began with this Cursillo is a very important piece of information."

"I have intentionally refrained from having recourse to other commentaries published about the Cursillos. I have used only primitive sources. Perhaps this version of the first stages of Cursillo is not in complete agreement with other versions, which are being circulated. We should not be surprised at this discrepancy because there are only a few of us who witnessed the origins of this renewal movement."

On page 4, top of the page, Fr. Ivan acknowledges that the Cursillo of 1949 was not the first one saying: "Since Bonnin is convinced that Cursillo began considerably before that date, the author does not use January, 1949.

The Shift of Focus Regarding the Tripod:

“Study is what a person does (“if he wishes”); Formation is what a person “receives”. “Study can lead a person anywhere (by his free choice, a concept taken from many other writings) It is creative. On the other hand, Formation directs one to a prefabricated model (a mold) thus, it is imitative.

Similar observations are shared about “Faith” (instead of Actual Grace), “Study and Evangelization of Environments (instead of Study of Environment) and “Developing Christian Community” (instead of Christianity in Action).

Certain leaders, especially among the clergy, attempt to mold the Movement into an ecclesiastical implement, instead of respecting the laity’s call to holiness in their environments, to bloom where they are planted (and not in a way preprogrammed by others.) Based on the first 3 Rollos, it is said that the encounter between “freedom” (“Ideal”) and “Grace” gives use to “Secularity” (in the

best sense of the word. N.B. “Seglar” (Secular in Spanish) is the translation for “Layperson”. All that follows in The 3 Days is an elaboration of this convergence. (Freedom & Grace = Role of the Layperson)

There is then a clear contrast between the definition of the Movement. The Fundamental Ideas (#111) has this definition of the Movement: “*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 vocation, and it promotes the creation of core groups of Christians who leaven their environments with the Gospel.*”

Eduardo Bonnin in “Aprendiz de Cristiano” (p.57) defines Cursillo thus “Cursillos in Christianity” is a movement from the Church which, through its own method, intends that the realities of what is Christian become incarnate, in the singularity, originality and

creativity of the person, so that discovering his potentials and accepting his limitations, exercises his freedom from out of his conviction, reinforces his will through his decision and lives a friendship of his individual and communal living.

Transformation of the Person:

Eduardo Bonnin has not changed the focus. From the beginning, in 1944, the focus of the Precursillo, the 3-Day Cursillo and the Postcursillo are thought, programmed and directed so that the concrete, real and normal man/woman, who lives his/her normal life can have an encounter with himself/herself. Only then his/her encounter with Christ is profound and his/her encounter with his/her neighbor is gratifying and effective. To evangelize is not only to speak about the Gospel, but also to try to make it live in the life of each one of us, right here and right now. The Kingdom of God is inside each one of us. When we make this reality conscious, it is then, and only then that it becomes communicative and contagious.

Cursillo awakens in us the hunger for God and it gives us the tools (method) for perseverance; for a progressive conversion. At the same time we are leavens in our environments. Nothing is imposed or mandated. One does not have to tell a Christian to christianize just as we don’t need to tell water that it needs to “moisten” (“wet”) or the light to “illuminate”, because they are made for that purpose, it is their



nature. From the beginning, Bonnin has said, "if a person has a true conversion, he/she will naturally Christianize his/her own environments. What is important is not to interrupt their natural process with "offers" (i.e. you need to evangelize; you need to incorporate to this or that group, institution, association etc... etc...")

"It is clear that the Cursillo Movement evangelizes, not by a system but rather as a consequence of its primary focus, which is the enculturation of the Christian ideal (or life). Cursillos preoccupy to make the Kingdom of God a reality on earth, providing the means and method of perseverance for Christians to help them comprehend their true identity as loving children of God, and thus motivate themselves to enter into an ever-growing and real loving relationship with the Father (Piety)."

As our Piety and Study progress, so will our Action, to the extreme that we really begin to live our growing comprehension of what it means to be Christian, in authentic union (communion) with our brothers and sisters, His other loving children.

The word Evangelization may lead us into being evangelizers preaching the Good News, instead of us becoming the Good News and that our actions be evangelical. (Historia de un Carisma, page 220)

We are either Christians or we are



Christian martyrs."
 Kazimierz Cardinal Swiatek tells his story "My Long Winter in Stalin's Gulags", recorded by Correspondent Luigi Geninazzi in the Italian newspaper Avvenire's Nov. 11 issue: *"I have always held that a woman's witness to her faith is one of the most precious things in life. It is the proverbial "babushke" women who managed to preserve faith in God during the years of persecution, when there were neither churches nor priests to be found. We must be grateful to them for the faith which has not disappeared forever from these heavily oppressed lands. It is these women to whom we owe gratitude for teaching at least the Our Father and Hail Mary to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Even if they haven't paid for the faith with their blood, their lives still bear the signs of martyrdom. They are heroic figures, even if a monument to their names will never be erected. Honor and glory to you, dear ladies, beloved babushke of gold!"*

On Thanksgiving Day and every day, we offer praise and thanks to the Lord for the foundational charism the Holy Spirit

bestowed upon Eduardo Bonnin to inspire the birth of the Cursillo Movement. As we are going to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our Cursillo Movement in the United States of America in 2007, we reflect on our Piety, Study and Action in order to find out where we are now. We are members of the Church that is not only made up of saints in heaven, but of men of tremendous valor here on earth" like Mother Teresa who sacrificed all her life to serve the poorest of the poor, like Eduardo Bonnin who has chosen a life of celibacy to dedicate all his time and energy to promote a vision of the Christian as apostle, a natural consequence of being Christian (F.I. # 19), and like many Cursillistas who are quietly guiding others through humble service and example. They are brave to free themselves of vice, selfishness, jealousy, arrogance, lust for money and power since these evils are obstacles to God's graces. They are certainly the men and women of tremendous courage in their own environments and in their special vocations.

Christ is counting on us Cursillistas to be His living witnesses in this world!

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NEW REGIONAL COORDINATORS COMMISSIONED BY BISHOP



During the Holy Mass starting the National Secretariat Meeting, the new Regional Coordinators were introduced and commissioned by Bishop James Tamayo, to serve their Cursillo Communities:

1. Ted Vaughters, Region 2 – English
2. Nancy Layko, Region 3 – English
3. Robert Kostin, Region 4 – English
4. Helen MacDonnell, Region 5 – English
5. Dominic (Richard) Luan Nguyen, Region 5 – Vietnamese
6. Jose Sanchez, Region 7 – Spanish
7. Al Uresti, Region 8 – English
8. Anicet Tan Ngo, Region 8 – Vietnamese (Substitute for Vincent Tin Pham who was ill the last minute).

SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The National Executive Committee Members have selected three (3) applicants for the interview phase of the selection process for the National

Executive Director's position. They are: Jorge Barcelo (Region 7), Victor Lugo (Region 8) and Martin Van De Ven (Region 11). These candidates will undergo a selection procedure by the National Executive Committee in a few weeks. The result will be announced by the beginning of the new year.

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ASSUMES THE DUTIES TO HIRE AND EVALUATE THE STAFF

The National Secretariat approved the addition of the duties to hire and evaluate the national staff to the National Executive Committee, into which the Personnel Committee is integrated. The Finance and Personnel Committee is now renamed "The Finance Committee", which consists of: a chairperson, who must be a member of the National Secretariat, two members who are not from the National Secretariat together with the National Executive Director and the National Treasurer as ex-officio members.

The Executive Committee Chairperson, Jo Tholenaar, sent letters of appreciation to all the members of the disbanded Personnel and Finance Committee Members for their faithfulness in having served our Movement for many years. They are Charles Grosscup, chairman, Bertha C. del Carpio, member and Jim August, consultant.

THE NEWLY FORMED FINANCE COMMITTEE

The National Secretariat also voted the following people to serve on its Finance Committee:

1. **James Wells**, Region 6- English), chairperson (same as his term as Regional Coordinator)
2. **Diego Melians**, Florida, non-Secretariat member (5-year term)
3. **Becky Guenther**, Kentucky, non-Secretariat member (3-year term)
4. **Tom Ford**, National Treasurer, member (incumbent)



NEW MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The ex-Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Jo Tholenaar, Region 1- English, and its Vice- Chairperson, Monin Gonzalez, Region 7 – Spanish, concluded their terms of service this year. The National Secretariat voted the following Coordinators to replace them:

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1. **Baudelio Del Real**, Region 5
Spanish, Chairperson
2. **Crispin Bautista**, Region 11
Spanish, Member
3. **Ponch Mondragon**, Region 9
English, Vice Chairperson
(incumbent)
4. **Mike Wiers**, Region 1
English (incumbent)

The position of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee is alternated between the 2 English and Spanish-speaking Cursillo Communities, according to the Articles of Operation of the US Cursillo Movement.



LEAVING COORDINATORS ARE APPRECIATED FOR THEIR FAITHFUL AND DEDICATED SERVICES

During the Holy Mass on Saturday Evening to conclude the National Secretariat Meeting, our National Episcopal Advisor, Bishop James Tamayo, on behalf of the Movement, thanked all the Coordinators for the faithful fulfillment of their dedicated services to our Church and God's people through the Cursillo Movement. The regional coordinators who have completed their term of service received certificates of appreciation from the Bishop. Jo

Tholenaar, Chairperson, and Monin Gonzalez, Vice Chair, were especially recognized for their dedicated service to our Movement faithfully and effectively running the Executive Committee. Then the newly-elected members of the National Executive Committee and of the Finance Committee were blessed, greeted and thanked for their willingness to serve our Movement. Jo Tholenaar, the ex-Chairperson of the National Executive Committee, handed the binder of the Chair's filed documents to her successor, Baudelio Del Real. All the meeting participants emotionally embraced one another to say goodbye and joyfully joined hands dancing and singing the "De Colores" song.

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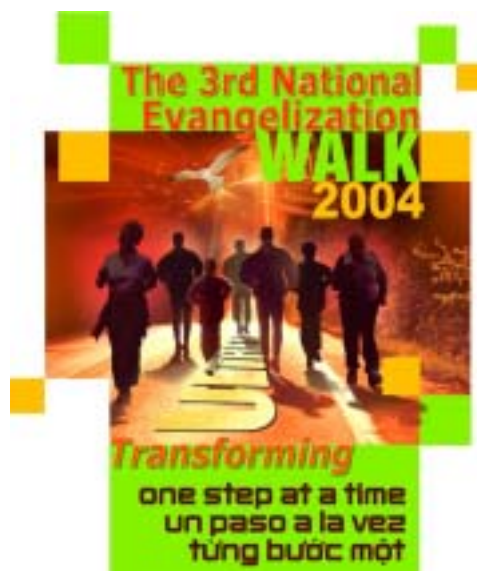
THE NATIONAL EVANGELIZATION WALK

The 2003 National Evangelization Walk was warmly and generously participated by many diocesan Secretariats of the Cursillo Movement. Many Cursillistas have expressed their appreciation to their diocesan leaders who have coordinated the Walk, which provided all language groups with the opportunity to meet, to pray, to reflect on their evangelizing mission, to socialize, to sample exotic foods and to walk together. That is the best occasion to promote unity in our Movement and in our Catholic Church. The National Cursillo Center has received about \$35,000 from the Walk proceeds and would like to

thank everyone who has spent time, energy and money to make this annual event a success, spiritually and financially.

The 2004 Walk will be held as planned but without specific date even though the Saturday before Pentecost remains the prayerful focus of our spiritual intention. The date for the Walk is up to the diocesan leaders to decide. The National Staff plan to make the shirts and brochures available for the Walk in late January of 2004. Please send your orders for the shirts with an estimated number of different sizes to meet your community's needs, by January 1st, 2004. This is a very "holy" fund-raising opportunity.

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National Cursillo Center

Most Reverend James Tamayo, Bishop of Laredo, TX, Episcopal Advisor

Rev. Pedro Garcia, Grand Rapids, MI, National Spiritual Advisor

Jorge Barceló – National Spanish-speaking Coordinator

Joachim Le – National Vietnamese-speaking Coordinator

Victor Lugo – National English-speaking Coordinator

THE ANNUAL NATIONAL CURSILLO ENCOUNTER

2004



The 14th Annual National Cursillo Encounter will be held in Seattle, Washington State, from July 29 to August 1, 2004. The theme is “**UNITY WITH CHRIST: Love should always make us tell the truth**” (Ephesians 4:14-16). This Encounter will have a different format from last year’s. There will be a variety of workshops on all aspects of the Cursillo Movement for the participants to choose from, based on the following books: “The Structure of Ideas” by Eduardo Bonnin, Bernardo Vadell and Francisco Forteza, and “The Three-Day Manual”, which will have been revised according to the foundational charism of the Founder of the Movement. These two said books will be available by the 2004 Encounter. Please mark your calendar and start to save

money to attend this interesting Encounter in order to deepen your relationship with yourself, with God and with your community, and also to get yourself enlightened with a wealth of knowledge of our Movement, through personal contacts and living witness sharing.

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FOUNDATIONAL CHARISM ...

not; there is no in-between. Approximately 2 million people have lived their 3-Day Cursillo here in the United States. If each person had a true and progressive conversion, they would be like water that does not need to be told to “moisten”, or light to illuminate, or like leaven that ferments the dough. We are Christians in our daily lives and in our natural environments. Therefore, there is

no need to say to a Christian that they need to evangelize; that they need to transform their environments. A Christian lives his/her Christianity 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year, every year of their lives.

(To be continued....)

