



The Cursillo® Movement

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HISTORY OF CURSILLO

Reference: Presented by Miguel Sureda of Palma de Mallorca at the National Encounter held at the University of Chapman in Orange, CA – August 1, 2014

Introduction

Dear friends, known and unknown, when they gave me the title of the Rollo and I was asked to speak on the History of the Cursillo Movement (CM), and I said “Yes”, believe me when I tell you that I did not know what I was getting myself into...

Since two months ago or more, I began reviewing historical data that I have been collecting for some years and extracting quotes from several books that talk about the history. I came to the conclusion that for my part, the best way to talk about the history, is to not have me talk about the history, but instead the central characters of this story, who have made it truth, and whom have not only written articles about the same, but have lived it fully and have left us a witness of what they have lived.

A basic reason for this decision is that I was not present at the beginning. My Cursillo story began years after the origin of Cursillos in Christianity, exactly 17 years after the first historic Cursillo held in Cala Figuera in Mallorca in August 1944, although it had really been brewing since the beginning of the 1940s.

What I have done since, is lived in contact with the majority of lay people and priests who were there since the beginning as leaders, such as: Eduardo Bonnín, Bartolomé Riutord and Guillermo Estarellas, who were never "candidates" because they were always servant leaders, and priests such as Guillermo Payeras and Francisco Suárez and others that, without being so well known, were helping in the early years, such as Fr. Gabriel Seguí, Fr. Mateo Galmés or Fr. Sebastián Jaume. I was also able to meet Fr. Sebastián Gayá and Fr. Juan Capó, although I have to say very superficially, since it was on the occasions of seeing them in events among many others, such as the I and II National Ultreyas of Spain in Tarragona and Santiago de Compostela, the I World Ultreya, or at the II World Leaders Encounter in Mallorca in 1972. And in the case of Fr. Sebastián, at the closing ceremony of the I Conversations of Cala Figuera in 1994. Fr. Jaime Capó, brother of Fr. Juan Capó, was Spiritual Advisor on my Cursillo, he became my Spiritual Advisor for a while during that time, together with Fr. Guillermo Payeras, Spiritual Advisor of the Cursillo Movement in Mallorca.

Cursillistas in the first years of Cursillos, including Cala Figuera, such as Salvador Escribano, Onofre Arbona, Damián Bover, Antonio Mezquida (I have not gone into my memory to find more) and through them, without realizing it, I grew up knowing that the start of Cursillos, its method, its mentality, its purpose and its evolution have been the work of Eduardo Bonnín. Although no doubt others participated and contributed, we cannot forget the laity who formed the group of friends with Eduardo: José Ferragut, Andrés Rullán or Jaume Riutord who met with Eduardo to study together. And Eduardo said that everything started in that group of friends

(first Group Reunion), their meeting on Sundays or during holidays in any place in the Mallorcan countryside near the town, going on their bikes with notes they had been collecting from the book they were all supposed to read, so that they could discuss it in those meetings. Nor can we forget the priests such as Fr. Sebastián Gayá (author of the Apostolic Hour and much of the Pilgrims Guide) or Fr. Juan Capó who brought the meditations of the first night of the Cursillo and actualized the theology of grace for the Cursillo of January 1949 and later together with Fr. Miguel Fernández, Fr. Guillermo Payeras and others of whom there is no memory, "rounded out" and shaped to the last detail the spiritual rollos and the meditations just as they appear in the Leaders Manual of Bishop Juan Hervás.

Before I begin reading what the "central characters" told us, I would like to clarify an issue: during my references to witnesses, you will hear different names attributed to Cursillo, and that is because during that time, there were several different types according to those who gave them and the purpose of the first ones that history talks about. They were called:

Cursillos for Advanced Pilgrims (Cursillos de Adelantados de Peregrinos)

Organized by the National Council of Catholic Action, they gave 6 of these Cursillos, from 1941 to 1946. They lasted a week and were aimed to train leaders for the Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, which took place in 1948. They were made in the Monastery of Lluch and consisted of 9 lessons given by priests on theology of Christian Life and 11 given by lay people that came from Madrid. Among these rollos, there were five with the same name or similar to the current rollos: the Ideal of the Youth of Catholic Action, Piety, Study, Action and Leaders.

Eduardo Bonnín agreed to attend the second of these Cursillos, during Easter week of 1943, invited by the then President of the Youth of Catholic Action, José Ferragut. Eduardo also attended the third in Easter Week of the year 1945, presenting the rollo *Study of the Environment*, which he had already given in the first Cursillo of Cala Figuera in August of the previous year (1944).

Cursillos for Pilgrim Leaders (Cursillos de Jefes de Peregrinos)

With similar content as the previous ones, but they were organized from the Diocesan Council of the Catholic Action, no documentation is available prior to August 1944. The news of the celebration of the first historic Cursillo of August 1944 can be found under this name (Cursillo for Pilgrim Leaders) in the Newsletter of the Youth of Catholic Action (JACE).

Other titles: Cursillos for Formation and Apostolate (Cursillos de Formacion y Apostolado), were the first ones after the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela; Youth Cursillos (Cursillos de Juventud); Cursillos of Conquest (Cursillos de Conquista); and finally after December 1953 – Cursillos in Christianity.

Without further ado, I'm going to start with the witnesses of the "central characters" who lived the history of our origins.

In order not to bore you with too many details, I have only selected the witnesses of those that give light to the developments and that were present as leaders at the Cursillo of January 1949, and in the case of the laity had already participated in previous Cursillos or their gestation; in the case of Eduardo at all Cursillos since 1943, Guillermo Estarellas in two since 1946, Bartolomé Riutord and Andrés Rullán in its gestation (for Andrés Rullán and Guillermo Font who was an

auxiliary, we don't have any documentation, written or recorded to provide his testimony). At the end I have also included ONOFRE ARBONA who, in addition to having gone to the Cursillo of Cala Figuera in 1944, was a member of the Diocesan Council of Youth of Catholic Action and took care of production of the "PROA" magazine, through which you can follow the origins of the Cursillos and their development from the year 1941 until 1957 when Bishop Enciso, who replaced Bishop Hervás, forbade its publication as a Newsletter of Cursillos in Christianity. Also Fr. Francisco Suárez, who joined the Cursillo Movement in 1950, was a personal friend of Fr. Juan Capó and who introduced Cursillos in Mexico.

Eduardo Bonnín

"I sincerely believe that one of the greatest assets that I possess is the knowledge of what the real Cursillos in Christianity consist of, as well as the Movement engendered by them. And I know by proven experience that when each piece that makes it up: Pre-Cursillo, Three-Day Weekend and Post-Cursillo - fulfils its purpose, it responds with clockwork precision to its aim, which is nothing else but to try to have the Good News of the Gospel reach as many people as possible, and preferably those furthest away ("The far away")."

"A categorical responsibility to those who may come after me."

"At the time of making my will I think that the best thing I can pass on to those who come after me is to leave in writing and in detail what this Movement consists of, what its purpose is, and what are the aims to be achieved by the Movement. To be faithful to the goal proposed and for which they were devised, designed, prayed for and structured since its beginning in 1944, and frequently they have been skimmed, disabled, abducted, or nipped in the bud of their nature and effectiveness."

"How did the idea of the 'Study of the Environment' occur to Eduardo?"

"The underlying original seed of the idea of Cursillo grew out of the conflict that took place in me, when the education I had received from the family environment that I had always lived in collided with the environment at the barracks when, at the age of 18, I entered military service. This service lasted nine years.

There, completely different values were lived, quite opposed to those that had been my light and guidance since my youth. This shock, continuously proven in my life at the barracks, prompted me to have the following thought: do these people feel weighed down by the Law or do they ignore the doctrine?

The barracks were located close to, almost in the heart of, the red light district of our city of Palma, and collective visits to brothels were frequent.

I always tried and sometimes managed to get a private talk with the leader of the clique and I almost always did it in the same way, for example, by asking:

"Did you have a nice time?" The answer was always the same: "yes", but I insisted: "Did you really enjoy it a lot, very much?" The response would be: " Well, you know"; and when we reached the intimate, personal and confidential level, he used to say: "I cannot stop thinking about my fiancée and how upset my mother would be if they knew about these adventures of mine and besides, if I am to be honest, I will tell you that after this type of adventure there is no peace in me."

So, in the end I spent all my extensive time at the barracks trying to find out what people were like, and I came to the conclusion that at the center, at the very center, everybody is the same.

This intensified my desire to dig deeper into the core of Christianity and my almost instinctive usual urge to read focused now on the books whose authors at the time were at the crest of the wave of the Christian world.

Then, a book entitled "H.H. Pious XII and Catholic Action," came into my hands and on page 45, number 59, I read a paragraph which reads literally, 'It is the duty of the parish priest, with a quick and agile look at the dual aspect of his parishioners, to form a clear and carefully detailed picture, we would say topographically, street by street, of his community. i.e. On the one hand the population of the faithful, especially its outstanding members, which could bring out the elements to promote Catholic Action within the community, and on the other hand the groups that had moved away from the practice of Christian life. They are also sheep that belong to the parish; lost sheep, and also for these, and even for them particularly, you are responsible custodians, my dearest children, and as good pastors you must not dodge any effort or work to find them and win them over again, nor must you indulge in any rest until all of them have found safety, life and joy in the return to the fold of Christ.'

That letter had an unusual effect on me and brought me to the decision that the most important thing to start with was to have at our disposal, as the Pope advised, a 'detailed study' of the situation. That conclusion led me to examine each of the constellations of individuals in the world, in my world and in the Church that I knew and frequented.

From all this, in 1943, the "Study of the Environment" was born and it was the beginning and origin of all that came afterwards.

From the "Study of the Environment" to the first Historic Cursillo:

It was a matter of choosing and selecting what constitutes the core of the Christian life and spirit, and with the selected index cards of all I was reading and the underlined passages in books, I had to arrange the material collected and sort it out in an attractive, dynamic and direct way so that it could enter into the heart of the listeners, but to tell the truth I could not think of the most effective way to communicate it.

Exposing ideas by calling people to meet at a certain place to listen to me with attention and interest seemed to me utopian and unthinkable.

At that time the Youth Branch of Catholic Action was totally focused and devoted to the preparations for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. The National President, Manuel Aparici, had launched the idea of gathering 100,000 young people in Santiago who lived in the Grace of God.

The person who was at that time the chairman of the Diocesan Youth of Catholic Action in Mallorca, invited me to the first of these cursillos, but I did not want to go.

But I attended the second one, which took place at Easter of 1943. I liked the atmosphere of camaraderie I could sense there and the spirit and cheerful mood with which lessons or lectures were put forward. I was sent as one of the leaders to the Cursillo for Pilgrim leaders that came

later and I was told to add an explanation of the rollo "Study of the Environment."

I learned a lot from these cursillos and, what is more, I found there the solution to what had always worried me, which was how to explain the ideas that I wanted to pass on to others and make them known to people with some chance of effectiveness. I realized then that what had always been my main concern could be solved by gathering people into a closed and isolated environment, and that this was the best way to ensure achieving what I wanted. I learned there that people should be distributed in groups; making posters and trying to get as many as possible involved. All this I discovered at those cursillos.

So, after much prayer and seeking people willing to pray for the idea, much thinking, planning and structuring, collecting and selecting again all the material accumulated on index cards, notes and underlined passages in books, we managed to gather a few candidates. We took the chance of planning a "new" cursillo, together with Jose Ferragut, who had been Diocesan President, Jaime Riutord and this Christian who writes and endorses this story, and to which he was appointed rector. [*Eduardo Bonnín*]

This was the first "Cursillo Three-Day Weekend", and although we called it "Cursillo for Pilgrim Leaders", because we would not have been allowed to hold it under any other name, they were not in the least bit like those with the same name that had been held in Mallorca up to then.

This happened in the year 1944.....

We needed a priest to explain the spiritual rollos to us and to take care of the spiritual direction of the weekend. Fr. Juan Juliá, accepted. All the material we had then, relevant to the role of the priest at the Cursillo, came from the schedules of the Cursillos for Pilgrim leaders, and we gave them to him. He had to improvise.

I have the joy and I feel the duty to say that this was already a real and complete Cursillos in Christianity, and it facilitated the participant's triple encounter with themselves, with Christ and with the brothers.

There were six more Cursillos between 1944 and 1948, with similar success, the Grace of God--- whenever I was asked who was the author of everything, I categorically said that it was the Holy Spirit, but when they asked me who did the structure, who collected the anecdotes, who did the lay rollos, who devised the Group Reunion and the Ultreya, in order not to lie, I had to say it was me.

What others contributed to Cursillo in its early days:

I can perfectly remember what other people contributed to the Cursillos: *Fr. Sebastián Gayá* was the only one who had faith in us, but during the development of the Cursillos, his many occupations did not allow him to dedicate as much time as he wished, which he demonstrated often. Even so, he wrote some articles in the magazine "Proa"- to which he gave the name "Stages of a Pilgrimage"- to prepare the environment for the pilgrimage to Santiago. He also wrote the Pilgrim's Guide.

Don Juan Capó was studying in Rome at the time of the birth of Cursillo, and on his return to Mallorca he was thrilled with the idea which we explained to him. His presence at the weekend

Cursillo at San Honorato in January 1949, which we officially called number 1, was limited to giving two meditations on the first night- January the 7th after which he returned to Palma.”

Fr. Sebastian Gayá

What Monsignor Jose Saiz Meneses says in his book "Genesis and Theology of Cursillos in Christianity" in its second edition page 21 - manifestation of Fr. Sebastián Gayá... and in the interview conducted in 2004, which can be seen on You Tube:

About Eduardo (from the same Interview)

"The role of Eduardo amongst the laity, a decisive role, was preeminent far above all others."

"Eduardo's contributions to the Cursillo Movement are basic and fundamental", and "the spirit of Eduardo permeates the Cursillo Movement, without which, it would seem that it would have cost the Holy Spirit more to act..."

About the Pilgrim Leaders Cursillos

"It had to do with organizing local, parochial cursillos that have nothing to do with what Cursillos in Christianity would be, however they were called cursillos-----they had to do with caring for the spiritual formation of those that would arrive at Santiago, they had to arrive as "saints".

From the book of Monsignor Jose Saiz Meneses

"First of all, I want to stress, - the importance of Eduardo's Rollo of the "Study of the Environment" for the ideological structure of the Cursillo." He never "discarded" the outline. This is also true of "The layman in the Church".

"He was also rector of the Cursillo of San Honorato. It was called "the first cursillo"; it contained all the elements of the method and all the priests who were at this time the "group of priests" as well as the 'spiritual rollos' and meditations as well."

About Eduardo's personality Fr. Sebastián Gayá highlights: "his fidelity to the Eucharist; his daily attendance at mass at seven in the morning at the Capuchins of Palma. For him, it is central. It is also worth mentioning his apostolic zeal, for his activity in Cursillos and his preference for the marginalized. We must highlight his book Structure of Ideas which was published outside Spain because Bishop Juan Hervás had vetoed any public presentation on Cursillo without his express authorization."

"The most positive trait of Eduardo is his perseverance, his tenacity; years and years of dedication to the Movement and, in addition, his training. Every night he devotes two hours to studying theology. He has also been very consistent in that. He reads a lot and whenever he needed to speak, pulled a piece of paper, or a card, and then he would begin explaining it. This gave birth to Structure of Ideas, which is totally his".

About Bishop Juan Hervás

"When young Mallorcan people presented themselves as the "youth of the bishop", he responded he would be the "Bishop of youth". Let's remember the Masses on Friday mornings with the members of the Diocesan Council.

Don Juan Hervás was a peaceful man in the birth of Cursillos. He intervened only by taking a very general supervision role and blessing the initiatives. Later, in the First World Ultreya in Rome (1966), I verified the facts of dedication to the Cursillo Movement. In Mallorca, it cost him very much to talk about Cursillos. Every morning (daily at the Curia Office) he would question me. He was lacking in trust.”

Guillermo Estarellas

Part of an interview conducted by Efigio Pilloni recorded on video in the year 2009:

“There are no other founders than the Holy Spirit, in first place, and Eduardo in second place, with no discussion possible. No one told me this, I have lived it and I have lived the first hours of Cursillos in Christianity with Eduardo and things are as I affirm. Eduardo is the sole founder of the outline and development of Cursillos in Christianity. The secular contribution that was introduced with the Cursillos in Christianity was Eduardo’s ideas in response to the actions of the members of Catholic Action, this I maintain because I have experienced it. Again, the Cursillos in Christianity were the fruit of a rejection against the apostolic routine of Catholic Action back then. They had study circles in each parish, there was a chaplain, who was the singing voice, and the laity, at that time, acted as the troupe, the religious troupe, but with little, very little prominence.”

Part of an interview conducted by Cati Bibiloni and Elisa Forteza:

“And they put me in Catholic Action, at the Diocesan Council. In the Diocesan Council, in 1946, I met a man who you know is Eduardo, who was the President of the Diocesan Council and a chaplain called José Dameto and there we began to work.“

“We effectively introduced a revolution, Spiritual and Apostolic in all Mallorca, under the direction of the Virgin of Lluch. We took the statue of the Virgin of Lluch and toured it throughout Mallorca. A revolution with Bishop Hervás, who already had the position as Bishop coadjutor for Bishop Miralles. Hervás was in the shadow, but when Bishop Miralles died, he moved forward and became the Bishop of the Diocese of Mallorca and the Cursillos were already underway.

Eduardo had another secret mindset, which were the Cursillos of Cala Figuera, which had begun with the one in Cala Figuera de Santanyi in 1944. Eduardo continued with his Cursillos because in addition the second was in 1946, in 1947 and 1948, there were three more.

When the one in 1949 came about, we had returned from Santiago. We were like a blacksmith without coal, because there were no ideals. The pilgrimage to Santiago was complete. - And then the Cursillos sprang up. Eduardo jumped into the ring with the bishop, with Fr. Juan Capó, with Fr. Sebastián Gayá, the first Cursillo of San Honorato was organized, which was in the year 1949, which was already the fifth after Cala Figuera. If we look at it from Cala Figuera, San Honorato was the 6th because in the Cala Figuera Cursillo, the bishop did not intervene at all. We worked with the chaplain of Catholic Action, which was Fr. José Dameto, who was a beautiful person who said yes to everything . . . and with the fixed idea of Eduardo, who had an obsession for his Cursillos. For those Cursillos, we stayed in San Salvador de Felanitx, in Pollensa... The ones from Cala Figuera were the seed, the fundamentals of Cursillos in Christianity. In other words, I am perfectly in agreement that the real origin of the Cursillos in Christianity is in Cala Figuera. And after that, why did San Honorato happen? Because Bishop Hervás became involved.

Later came Fr. Sebastián Gayá, who was the Vicar General for Bishop Hervás. Bishop Hervás got in and staged a hierarchical religious coup, in the other Cursillos, we had no bishop, it was practically done the way Eduardo wanted.

Fr. Juan Capó

From the book: "Small Stories of the History of the Cursillo Movement"

How did the Cursillo begin?

"Much has been said and written. It was not a coincidence. Many of its elements are found in the Cursillos prior to the 1st Cursillo of San Honorato. However, the Cursillo of San Honorato led to a new reality."

For some years, one or two Cursillos were organized each year. Derived from the Cursillos for Pilgrim Leaders, modified and enriched. Many elements, many of the goals can be found in those Cursillos.

The truth is that they were not borne in an instant, like the achievement of a miracle -----by the finger of God. It is not the work of a man, but of a group, of an atmosphere, a convergent effort first, and then shared."

"We planned a Cursillo and another was not foreseen, for the moment. "The Cursillo" was organized. One more . . . and after that . . . another one followed.

"In the group of names, I think that Eduardo's should be highlighted, G. Estalleras, J. Mir, B. Riutort, A. Rullán... (Eduardo - B.Riutord, A.Rullán were from the beginning of the beginnings, G. Estarellas from 1945)"

"Eduardo Bonnín was perhaps the only one who had everything about the Cursillo programmed. It is through this program that the previous Cursillos had later come to our knowledge."

"There are those who do not appear over the years and whose influence was decisive. -It would be difficult to define the role of Bishop Hervás before 1954. However, to him the Cursillos owe their survival."

"I don't think that I can speak of novelty in the method, that is to say, in the purpose of the team. But we should, talk of novelty in the doctrinal content."

"There is a radical innovation. The Cursillos acquire an accent and a new dynamic in the light of the "spiritual rollos", which focus the Evangelical proclamation on the doctrine of Grace."

"Actually, the Cursillos that were given before, were called by many different names the Cursillo of San Honorato, was given the generic name of Formation and Apostolate Cursillo. Before, they were called Cursillos of Conquest, there were Youth Cursillos; in the XV Assembly, held in December 1953, Monsignor Hervás, almost without thinking, came up with the word Christianity."

Bartolomé Riutord

From a Video Interview with Efsio Pilloni:

“My name is Bartolomé Riutort Catalá. I am 86 years old. I'm from the age of the dinosaur in the Cursillos. I met Eduardo in 1928 went we went to the same school of the Augustinian Fathers, on Socorro Street. I was younger than him by six years. He was from the higher classes and I was with the little ones. But since I had a brother, closer to his age, the first relationship was with my brother and then me.”

“His spirit of inquiry, captivating ideas, dynamism and all of those characteristics and circumstances he possessed, I would say almost innately. His desire to know, understand, interpret and research everything that was new, everything new that was new in giving a movement to the Church which was way ahead of its time.”

I remember that in one of the first Cursillo, the first of all that was held in Santanyí, (Cala Figuera), Eduardo was the Rector and the professors (team leaders) were my brother Jaime and José Ferragut.

“One that I really remember is the one at Cura (in 1948), which was attended by “professor” (team leader) Miguel Fiol, who was one of those who had attended the Advanced Pilgrims Cursillos (Cursillos para adelantados de Peregrinos. And the ones that came up were “caught” from here and there. And as they climbed the Mount of Cura to make the Cursillo, one blasphemed, another used a swear word and this Fiol put his hands on his head and said to Eduardo, “Eduardo, who are you bringing here?” “What are we going to do with these people?” Eduardo answered, "Don't worry, and just keep going". He made the Cursillo and it was extraordinary. One of those who came out of this Cursillo was Guillermo Font, skilled leader for years in Cursillos.”

Fr. Francisco Suárez, Cathedral Councillor, Mallorca.

Collaborator with Bishop Hervás in the implementation of the Cursillo Movement in Ciudad Real, personal friend of Fr. Juan Capó and introducer of the Cursillo Movement in Mexico.

From his testimony in “An Apprentice Christian”:

“Eduardo is a person who lives and dreams with Cursillo in Christianity. At his side others gave them momentum, such as Dr. Hervás and Juan Capó, but without him, they would not exist, it is his genius.”

In the present and in the future, for the leaders and international, national and diocesan institutions, the thought, the mentality, and the writings of Bishop Hervás, Fr. Juan Capó and Eduardo Bonnín have been and will be the guarantee of the necessary fidelity to the Foundational Charism, and the immutable essence and purpose of Cursillo in Christianity.

Under the same name, its essence must remain intact. It is well known that what is essential is not and cannot be at the mercy of a vote not even by a majority. In good philosophy, what is essential is eternal and immutable. And this is neither fundamentalism nor immovability. What this is about is saving the essential when thinking about changes and adaptations.”

Onofre Arbona

Excerpt from the video interview with Onofre Arbona who lived the Cala Figuera Cursillo in

1944:

The Cala Figuera Cursillo, Eduardo Bonnín was there; J. Ferragut, and Jaume Riutord also came. Fr. Juan Juliá, was the spiritual advisor in 1944.

The rector was Eduardo Bonnín. We called it the Cala Figuera Cursillo, but nothing more. It was years later that Eduardo told me "do you remember that Cursillo, well it was the number one, the first of all".

If there were a founder, who would you say this founder is?

Founder of Cursillos in Christianity? Eduardo Bonnín. Of the Cursillos in Christianity, yes!
Founder yes, we can say founder.

And the figure of Fr. Sebastián Gayá within the movement?

As an intellectual, maybe Fr. Sebastián Gayá, but no, no, no. Eduardo Bonnín was the founder; there is no comparison between one and the other. In a single word, I'll say it differently. I speak from my own point of view. Without Fr. Sebastián Gayá there would have been Cursillos in Christianity. Without Eduardo Bonnín, we wouldn't have Cursillos in Christianity. This is not only my point of view, that's the way it was. Without Eduardo we wouldn't have the so-called Cursillos in Christianity. On the other hand, without Bishop Hervás, without Fr. Sebastián Gayá, without Fr. Juan Capó, without these men, Cursillos would have existed. Without Eduardo, NO!

In history, it could occur as they say, "every one speaks about the fair as they experienced it" for this reason, there are in this case two completely different versions of the origins. This is how Eduardo Bonnín expressed it to Fr. Cesáreo Gil who introduced the Cursillo Movement in Venezuela and National Advisor of the National Secretariat, (first seat of the World Organization of Cursillos in Christianity - OMCC.)

(Letter from Eduardo to Fr. Cesáreo Gil from: "History of a Charism" by Eduardo Bonnín, FEBA)

Account of the events that actually took place:

The truth is that the initiating group - composed of lay people and only lay people- once conceived, structured and launched, the movement, just as it has been operating ever since in Mallorca, received support, impetus and an almost unprecedented vigor, with the appointment of Bishop Hervás, Auxiliary Bishop of Mallorca in 1946 became the bishop in 1947. The group of lay people, when they were listened to and supported by the bishop, lived historical days so effervescent and with deep fervor, the movement, thanks to his enthusiastic collaboration and momentum, opened the Church doors. It was then, and only then, when "some priests and two or three religious" joined the initial group of laity, at their request.

Story of the same facts as some of them would like it to have occurred:

"The Cursillo in Christianity are a secular work. They were born at the end of the 1940's, in Mallorca (Spain), under the pontificate of Monsignor Juan Hervás and 'within a climate of a pastoral plan'. (directed by the hierarchy; helped by priests, religious and some laymen)."

I could verify this perfectly well when I read the witnesses of various people and which I have presented schematically. This was made more clear and notorious to me while reading a book entitled "Cursillo In Christianity Realities and Experiences", compendium of two lectures given in the year 1956, six months after the implementation of the Cursillo in Ciudad Real driven by

Bishop Hervás, showing the reality of the moment in that diocese, only to display in two subjects where radical clericalization occurs and it reads:

In the Rules for the selection of Cursillistas, page 171:

Choose men and not boys. From thirty to forty-five years, more or less who stand out for their natural qualities and enjoy the esteem of their fellow citizens.

In Appendix II - Meeting of Perseverance: ULTREYA, page 209:

Outline of the Group Reunion, AS IT HAD BEEN celebrated:

1st – Group Reunion

2nd – A Cursillista previously appointed, presents a subject that he has chosen and prepared.

3rd – Several assistants, who have been appointed, made the criticism on the subject matter.

Outline of the Ultreya AFTER the Survey:

1st – Group Reunion

2nd – Doctrinal lesson, given by a priest

3rd – A Cursillista previously appointed, presents a subject prepared with the advice of the chaplain.

Here it is clearly observed the turn towards the clericalization that very soon occurred.

With no doubt it can be affirmed that very early these two versions were provided and it clearly shows in some letters exchanged between Bishop Hervás and Eduardo about the origins of Cursillos: in response, Eduardo says, among other things: "...the only thing that interests me is to clarify the genuine history with sincerity I understand that the time has come to say it so that everyone knows that the Cursillo, in its essential lines, and even in its details, were already structured and shaped in almost all of the details that are integrated in them now, in the year 1946, that were conceived and structured by lay people only. The priests always went against the grain of the Cursillos and never attended the meetings to prepare them, which were taking place then; some due to their multiple responsibilities and others for their little interest....."

And to me, this, makes me understand the tension, the courage, the faith of our friend Eduardo, who even in his last months of life, was determined to leave us his "Spiritual Testament" to let us know and recognize the laity of the Cursillo Movement being a church movement and keeping his faith that the truth does not need "floatation devices".

That is why I would like it to be known, to all those who did not have the good fortune to personally know him – not his work, not his thinking – but his person, the person of:

Eduardo Bonnín

I met him in the summer of 1964.

A GREAT GIFT - a gift from the Lord, I have had the opportunity of sharing with Eduardo for nearly fifty years, during Group Reunion or other times, but seeing each other almost every week, especially since the year 2000, the date of my retirement.

I am not going to talk about his thinking, it is all written and you can easily access it through books that can be found in the US National Cursillo Center and/or by recorded rollos or articles printed on the website of FEBA (www.feba.info)

It has been exactly 50 years.

Do not panic, I won't tell the whole story of a friendship, only those events that discovered an extraordinary person: An Apprentice Christian.

I am nothing more than a person *infected* by Eduardo, by a *virus* to be more and a better person, trying to be Christian.

My Cursillo - January 1961.

Eduardo was not authorized to be active in the Cursillo Movement.

The first time that I heard about him:

"The blonde" (blonde hair) – in a tone almost of mockery – his office: a place where he "indoctrinated"... his "flat feet".

The first time that I saw him:

Capuchins Mass at 7 in the morning, his appearance: "short, thin, bald, flat feet, "a little thing" (and this is the one that conquers the world...?)"

The first time I talked to him:

A mutual friend wanted me to accompany him to see him (Eduardo) about an English girl that he had made pregnant. My friend was convinced that he would have to marry the girl, and he had a fiancé that he wanted to marry.

Then, I remembered it as if so many years hadn't passed by; I went to see him (Eduardo) in the family agricultural products store, (bags of almonds, beans, legumes etc.)... a small office and Eduardo writing behind a window, with glasses and holding a pencil on top of his ear... the home of his family on the first floor. His office, books, books, books... is what I remember.

Ultreya - To facilitate the encounter between people. It is like getting ready to play the piano – to be at the right distance from the keyboard, you move the stool, not the piano.

Group Reunion - In what place in your life do you have it?

Let it not occur as the one who invites you to his house to show you a postage stamp of great value and when you arrive he cannot find it. He begins to search through the drawers of the desk, on the shelves etc. - would anyone think that the stamp is really valuable? If we have the Group Reunion in the furthest corner of our lives, how can we convince others of its effectiveness?

Individual Treatment

HIS WAY OF COMMUNICATING: He shared what he lived.

Visit to Nadal Torrens, (Eduardo's friend) a lesson of faith.

HIS HOPE: For the Lord, for the people, so they could discover the "gift of God".

HIS FAITH IN THE LORD:

He believed in Providence, everything has value, the good, the bad: offer up the bad, and for the good, be thankful. "God loves you and wants the best for you, he is omnipotent."

"With Christ everything is possible". "Everything is possible for him who believes".

"If you had as much faith as a grain of mustard seed, you would move mountains".

"He who is not convinced is defeated".

"Barriers have to be placed from intelligence; the will is the last line of defense"

"When the devil cannot defeat you, he acts like an octopus: releases the ink and clouds your vision and mind, what interests him is to have you immobilized so you don't bother him..."

HIS FAITH IN THE PERSON:

There is a play entitled "The hidden source", "water runs under a rock, not to be a fountain yet, but to be there, affection is the same. Until it has a chance to have light and flow and become a fountain. It has to penetrate the rock, because God hid it in the dark to ensure the purest springs under the hardest rocks."

HIS GIFT TO OTHERS: "to whoever, wants to be totally filled, fill him totally", but also, "whoever doesn't listen, shake the dust from your sandals and leave".

He didn't care what you did, but what you wanted to do what you were determined to get.

He never watched the clock; it hurt him not to be able to assist you if he had to interrupt you because of a previous commitment.

He didn't have a schedule to meet others... wherever, whether he had eaten or not, slept or not slept.

Julian and Magdalena

He was an alcoholic and his wife was a cleaning lady. Eduardo went to their house each morning to make sure Julian took his pill. Shortly before dying, Eduardo, for many years we didn't hear anything from Julian, told us that he had to go to meet Julian. We asked, do you still see him? His answer: He is my friend . . .

Antonia, with an alcoholic husband, who had a job at the market selling fruit every day, went to see him to see if he could do something to help the husband and/or encourage the wife.

Precursillo: the beggar, he is worth it, the neighbor who was an upholsterer and an alcoholic; for the son of the prostitute, he became like a father to him.

That he wants to go: "anecdote of the married man that left his wife." What we should want is not for him to come back, but that he wants to come back.

What he said to us: Leaders in the postcursillo pay attention, if you go to the Ultreya without the intention of being attentive, you're better off staying home. In the Ultreya you must have the same attitude as in the Cursillo weekend.

A Christian reaction gives better witness than a Christian action. – The thief who assaulted him in his house with a knife. Eduardo said, "I'll buy it from you".

HIS PERSONAL ATTENTION: I can assure that if it hadn't been for him, I currently would not enjoy living as I enjoy it now. He made me realize how important I am to God and that he counts on me. In the car going to see Toni Darder, "You are very important to me. To me, you

have the same value that Christ gives you, who came into this world for you".

He travelled with another friend in his car from Palma to go see me at Porto Colom (60 kilometers away). He listened to "Zarzuela" (Spanish musical) because we both liked it. His joy in realizing you trusted him- after my sharing non-important personal things.

And it was not a particular attention to me, Miguel Sureda; anyone who approached him was important.

HIS HUMILITY: Admiration! - he said, "where can you look without admiring?"
Open to learn from others: talking with one, always listening, many times while speaking with him he would say "one moment, so you could repeat what you just said for him to take notes. I wouldn't want to overlook the small things".

"Freedom to be yourself".

HIS ABILITY TO WITHSTAND:

My first Cursillo as rector: Asking Eduardo to give the Total Security Rollo instead of me, and he did and this only a few minutes before!!....

HIS SENSE OF HUMOR:

"You have to tell me when you find someone dumber than me"

He would laugh especially at himself: Singing to himself the Mexican song, (El Rey) And you thought you were the King of the world!!

HIS FRIENDSHIP:

A friend who has never tried to tell me what I have to do, or what I have to think.

But who has given me through sharing in friendship, a reason to live, hope for love, channeling my thoughts, and reasons to act,

That he has always respected me as a person. That he has always been available to me.

That what he was interested in was me, my happiness. Not my actions, not my contributions, not my fruits – but pure and simply, my person.

What he has taught me, without intending to, is to be a friend and what it is supposed to be:

Not demands on the friend, but demands on me.

Admire, but don't imitate.

Accept the friend as he is and to be accepted as I am.

Understand that friendship is an attitude of life, all life: thanks to the friendship that I have found in the Cursillo I have been able to live with a friendly attitude towards all. (Except when I acted like a "fool")

The last time I saw him with full awareness:

His legacy to me: "BE FRIENDS".

We should live in friendship with those we call "us", (myself included) with Christ and with all others!!!!

We should make a world of friends! our world, my world: This is the Gospel mandate: "Love one another"; and "I do not call you servants but friends".

We can do it with Christ - and Eduardo in the Lord freer than ever, can assist us!!!!
Now it is not necessary to ask him when we can go see him.

DE COLORES!