



# The Cursillo® Movement

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## **Cursillos in Christianity Foundational Charism**

*Reference: Presentation by Juan Ruiz, National Cursillo Encounter, Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York, - July 26, 2013.*

### **Prayer and presentation...**

For some of our cursillista friends, to hear of the “Cursillos in Christianity Foundational Charism”, it seems to them that we are inventing more terminology, which can, or that is, complicating and dividing the Movement of Cursillos in Christianity.

Inclusive, I remember a day in a class of the school of leaders, where they were talking about all the points of the three days of the Cursillo weekend, as soon as someone related the “Foundational Charism” to one of these points, he was suddenly stopped and told that was another issue which is very different...

### **Can you imagine?...**

**How can it be a different issue, when everything related to the essence, mentality, purpose, strategy and methodology of the Cursillo Movement, it's precisely part of its “Foundational Charism”?**

We need to remember that since the First Conversations of Cala Figuera, in Mallorca Spain in the year 1994, they were already talking of a “Foundational Charism”. After the three World Encounters in Rome, the latter being in this past May with our great Pope Francis, they have constantly talked about the “Foundational Charism” of all the ecclesial movements and new communities, recognized by the Holy See. Therefore, as clarification, I would like to emphasize that I am not inventing absolutely anything, when I speak of the “Foundational Charism” of Cursillos in Christianity, but quite simply, using the terminology that uses our church, when referring to these gifts of the Holy Spirit.

And to have a little more clearly what a “charism” is, in religious terms exclusively, we can start with what the Pastoral Dictionary (editorial verbo divino, 1988) says a charism is. It says that the Greek term “charism”, means “*gift*”, a “*present*” which is equivalent to “*grace*”, to “*dádiva*” to “*appeal*” or “*vocation*”. It's practically synonymous of “*functions and activities*”.

And he goes on to say, “*the charisms are, therefore, the effects of the Spirit of God in the singular believer, which can never be demanded by the man, nor can they be provided by the official bodies of the church, nor can they be achieved by the reception of the sacraments*”.

*“In its own meaning, the charism can be defined as the continuous concrete vocation that is serving in the Christian community, constitutes and builds on a permanent basis, and is at the service of their fellow men in love”; and the dictionary continued saying: “being unpredictable in their forms, the charism must be discovered and accepted, again and again, always new,*

*which requires a delicate action of discernment and listening to the spirit in the ecclesial community,”* And here, we finish with the definition.

The theology also tells us, that a charism is *“a gift that God gives to those who He wants, but not for the recipient who receives it, but for the benefit of the entire community and the church”*.

Therefore, after these two explanations, we can say that in each charism, we can distinguish four different elements:

- 1. That is a gift of the Holy Spirit**
- 2. That is deposited on a person or group**
- 3. That is for the good of the community**
- 4. That is recognized by the church**

- a. **Looking at the first element**, after seeing what the pastoral dictionary and theology tells us, I believe that there is no doubt, that it is effectively a charism, a gift (grace) of the Holy Spirit. All the charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit. And as a gift of the Holy Spirit, is infallible. That is, that neither you, nor I, nor anyone else, can change a gift that comes from the Holy Spirit. The essence of any Christian leader, who freely chooses to use any charism to serve the church, is simply to study it, understand it, live it and apply it as it was originally designed. In a nutshell, being faithful to the authenticity of any founding charism.

The Cursillo in Christianity Movement also has its own and operating charism, as it is a gift of the Holy Spirit to his church, that is accomplishing from its initiation in 1944 in Mallorca (Spain), by a group of lay people directed by Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló, that many people, especially those who are distant, have an encounter with themselves, with God, with Christ, and with their fellow men.

- b. **On the second element**, through history, we can also see that it was actually deposited in a person or group. In our case, this person was Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló. Of course there were other people who assisted him. The same Eduardo used to tell us how he worked with them, first with some lay people and then with some priests as well. But there is no doubt that the inspiration of the Cursillos in Christianity, came through the person of Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló
- c. **In the third element**, we can say with any accuracy, that since August 20, 1944, when history's first Cursillo was lived in the Chalet of Mari Pins of Cala Figuera of Santany in Mallorca Spain, until this year 2013, after nearly 70 years of existence, there are already Cursillos in all five continents of the world. And this clearly shows that it has been for the good of the people of God. And not Eduardo Bonnin, nor the Cursillo, has lived for themselves, but for the good of the world, through each person that discovers the love and friendship of God in Jesus Christ, using the methodology of Cursillos.
- d. **And on the fourth element**, it has definitely been recognized by the church. This charism is fully recognized by the hierarchy; through the Pontifical Council for

the Laity, through Cardinal Joseph Cordes in the book “Signs of Hope”, through Pope Paul VI in the First World Ultreya in Rome in 1966, as well as by Pope John Paul II in the Third World Ultreya in Rome in 2000 and Pope Benedict XVI in the II World Encounter of ecclesial movements and new communities in the year 2006. Inclusive, you can also see what our Pope Francis is now telling us, whom even though not a cursillista himself, knows the Cursillo Movement very well and gave it a lot of support as cardinal in Buenos Aires.

In this same or similar manner, all of the Catholic Church’s charisms need to be recognized by the holy church.

Therefore, we need to recognize that each ecclesial movement and/or new communities within the Catholic Church, has a charisma that is fundamental and specific for each one of them. These charisms, I repeat, come from the Holy Spirit and are fully recognized by the Holy See.

### 1. **The Foundational Charism of the CCM**

And to fully discuss the specific charism of the Cursillos in Christianity Movement, it requires a Cursillo de Cursillos that, as any regular Cursillo, begins on Thursday afternoon and ends on Sunday afternoon.

Here, I only have 45 minutes to speak on this topic, so I will try to summarize and simplify it a little, with the hope of not confusing you.

2. Now, as I was previously saying, all the gifts come from the Holy Spirit, and absolutely all of them, have the same value. They are not there to compete amongst each other, but to complement each other. Each is a different path that seeks to lead us to the same goal that is God. But each one of them is unique and different, with its own mentality, its own essence, its own purpose, its own strategy and methodology. And of course, each one, very specific and valuable in the universal church. As both Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI repeated, ***“the ecclesial movements and new communities, are the springtime of the church”***
  - a. And we need to see that during the II World Encounter in Rome of ecclesial movements and new communities in 2006, we already had more 105 different charisms recognized by the Holy See. In other words, we have charisms for all kinds of needs.
  - b. And although all these charisms are very different, they all have exactly the same value. We can see how the Holy Spirit is already responding to the signs of the times, creating the charisms necessary to respond to the current needs of the church. And there is absolutely no need to improve, change or manipulate any charisma for a specific purpose. And much less, combine the charisms, since it may result in something better or worse, but no longer will it be one or the other. And as an end result, you can no longer be called in the same way.

3. Concentrating and studying specifically the Foundational Charism of Cursillos in Christianity, we can discover some of the key elements that constitute it, for example:
  - a. **Its specific message:** God loves you, it loves me, it loves you, and it loves all of us and each one of us in a very individual and personal way.
  - b. **It also has a global vision:** a true vision, new and dynamic. Because it is not the same thing having to love God, to know that God loves me, in a personal and individual way.
  - c. **It has its own unique approach:** a basic and total approach that goes to the root. And as we well know, the root of every Christian is precisely the grace.
  - d. **It also has its own awareness::** a basic awareness of the true reality in which we live, in a study of our environments; in its time and space
  - e. **It has a proposal as well:** a practical proposal, an attractive and possible proposal. That is, the possibility of living and sharing together what is fundamental to being Christian.
  - f. **It also has its own specific response:** a response full of conviction, lucid and jubilant of this possibility
  - g. **It also has its own proclamation:** the live proclamation, which tends to awaken in others, the newly discovered evidence - a kerygmatic charism - testimonial.
  - h. **And of course it has its own projection:** the projection is unique to the person, the man or woman that has the capability of conviction, of the decision and constancy. This way, it fosters the vision, it outlines and refines the reality, not to force decisions, but for mature convictions.
4. Therefore, using the words of Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló, we can say *that “The Cursillos in Christianity is a Movement that by means of their own method, attempts from within the Church, to ensure that the realities of Christianity are brought to life in the uniqueness, the originality, and in the creativity of each person. From their deep conviction their freedom finds the right direction and they discover their potential and accept their limitations, thus their will is strengthened. Friendships are developed by virtue of their decision and perseverance in their daily, personal and community life.*

And also, in with the same words of Eduardo we can say: *“The Cursillo Movement, is to proclaim the best news of the best reality: that God in Christ loves us. Communicated by the best means that is friendship, toward the best of each one that is your life as a person, your ability of conviction and constancy.”*

**And this leads us directly to its purpose!**

5. **The purpose of the Foundational Charism is:**

- a. That those who are faraway, although not exclusively, meet with the love and friendship of God in Jesus Christ, through the use of the three encounters of its methodology; with himself, with God and with the others. The faraway being, the people that live far way, physically or by criterion, of the truth of the gospel's love and friendship of God in Jesus Christ.
- b. And by their own and constant conversion, will ferment of that love and friendship of God in Jesus Christ, all the environments in which they will move the 24 hours of each day - their moveable square meter.
- c. Also, that the candle that God has lit in the center of their heart, continue to burn and enlighten its entire moveable square meter, which accompanying us 24 hours a day. This moveable square meter that is with us 24 hours a day, is precisely the environment that the methodology of the Cursillos in Christianity's Foundational Charism refers to.

6. **Now , let's look at some peculiar characteristics that expresses this Charism:**

- a. **First, it needs to be a brief course, a retreat, where they are isolated**, men with men and women with women - to focus attention and sharpen the intention.
- b. **Second, it needs to be a short course of three days**, including the weekend or holidays, to facilitate the attendance of the people.
- c. **Third, it needs to be a precise course:** give what is required of Christianity, in a specific and concise way
- d. **Fourth, it needs to be a simple course**, alive, testimonial and immediate in the common and ordinary language of the people
- e. **Fifth, it needs to be an attractive course**, which meets the present and real needs of the person
- f. **Sixth, the course needs to be accessible**, accessible to all and for all. If leaders go first, it is simply to accelerate the process
- g. **Seventh, it needs to be a verifiable course**, based on the current reality of life, without the need of much doctrine or theology
- h. **And in summary, it needs to be an auto- discovery of this great personal treasure** - "the pearl" that everyone searches for and that is precisely in the center of the heart of each one of us. It needs to be the source of living water, such as the one of "Samaritan woman"

## 7. **And on the strategy or the means to live the Foundational Charism**

- a. As I mentioned earlier with the words of Eduardo Bonnín, *“The Cursillo message of the love and friendship of God in Jesus Christ, gets projected by Foundational Charism through the best vehicle that is friendship, to the best of every human being that is their own person”*.
  - b. **This strategy of friendship** , its applied throughout its methodology - starts in the precursillo, it intensifies and shown as a possibility to live and share what’s fundamental to being Christian in the three days of the cursillo, and confirmed, mainly and fully, in the postcursillo.
  - c. Also, throughout its methodology, starts and maintains a constant experiential growth of these **three encounters**, with himself, with Christ and with others. And as a result, is channeled the lay spirituality which leads a person, in the way of holiness.
  - d. This way, we can clearly see, that the charism is communicated by contagion, via the person who is trying to live and share the love and friendship of God in Jesus Christ that is nothing more, than what’s fundamental to being Christian.
8. **As we know already or we are beginning to realize, this charism applies this strategy through its own methodology that is composed of:**
- a. **The precursillo** - that is nothing more than the knowledge and preparation of the candidate through friendship.
  - b. **The cursillo** - the three days where the three encounters; with ourselves, with Christ and with the other are deepen and shown as a possibility to live and share what’s fundamental to being Christian.
  - c. **The postcursillo** - the phase of the methodology for which all the charisma is designed.
  - d. **The school of leaders** - where we are given the opportunity to deepen in the charism and make of our own cursillo, a perennial Cursillo.
  - e. **The group reunion** - one of the two means of perseverance that the cursillo’s charism offers to grow in our Christian life.
  - f. **The ultreya** - the second means of perseverance that the Cursillo’s charism offers to grow in our Christianity, as individuals and community.
  - g. **The secretariat** - this being, the least minimum operational structure, which the Cursillo’s charism offers, not for having power or control anyone or anything, but simply to serve, unify, inform and ensure the authenticity of the same charism.

- h. **And mainly, our moveable square meter**, where we all have the opportunity to live and share our own Christianity.

All of these elements, although because of the short time that I have to present them, I have only had a chance to touch a bit of their foundation, are all essential to the Foundational Charism and cannot be changed or manipulated. This is why in the beginning of this rollo, I mentioned that we really need an entire Cursillo de Cursillos, to deepen on each of these elements.

We also need to be well aware, that this Foundational Charism, has the same flexibility of the gospel and respects the important things that may arise, due to the different cultures and traditions of some countries. As long as they do not obstruct what is essential. Also, there are some accidental things that crop up from time to time, extras things that for one reason or another you will begin to add, and which I can assure you that if we took them off, absolutely nothing will happen. On the contrary, we will give more space to the Holy Spirit to do his job, and for us, we will have more opportunity to better clean the passage of our own being, so that with more ease, the grace of the Lord can get through every one of us, to the best of every human being, that is his own person.

**The simpler, the most effective!**

## 9. In summary

The Cursillo's Foundational Charism is an attitude that is characterized by its:

- a. Optimism.
- b. By its joy.
- c. By its boldness and his tenacity.
- d. By its constant decision of its conviction.
- e. By valuing securities that are always worth it.
- f. And because everything is done from Christ, by Christ, with Christ and for Christ.

## 10. And concluding

I would like to repeat that the Cursillo's Foundational Charism is a charism of the Holy Spirit and therefore, absolutely no one can change it!

1. As Christian leaders in the Cursillo in Christianity Movement, we freely choose the responsibility of, how the Blessed John Paul II would say, "*To remain faithful to its charism*". Also, as stated by Pope Benedict XVI, "*to open new paths, saving fidelity to the founder*".

Two fundamental responsibilities for any Christian leader of Cursillos in Christianity Movement; fidelity **to the charism and its founder**.

## How can we make it happen?...

- a. First, by exploring and deepening in the Foundational Charism, through Cursillo de Cursillos and so much literature and media facilitated by new technologies.
  - b. Second, by praying to discover the joy of living and sharing this Foundational Charism, since it is the only way to fully understand and share it effectively.
  - c. And third, maintaining our selves up today with the gospel, attentive to the people and open to the reality in which we live. This way, our message will always be up today, without the need to remove or change any idea, dot or comma, from the Rollo's outlines.
2. Finally, I think we can make a scheme made up of three words, which could basically synthesize the mentality, the essence, the purpose and strategy of the Cursillos in Christianity's Foundational Charism:

### Christ - Person - Friendship

- **Christ** - but being the Christ alive, that is within each one of us.

That **normal Christ** that we can live within the normality of the reality in which we live.

And a **close by Christ** that is inside each one of the people around us.

- **Person** - because God created us with his image and we became his son, the brother of Christ, and living temple of the Holy Spirit. We need to realize that great honor and privilege.

And really, what meaning would our life have, without the greatest thing that God created in the world? ...

What would be the whole meaning of life, without that being that God created with his image and likeness?

And what would be the meaning of life, without this person?

- **Friendship** - here we can use the same words of our friend Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló,

*“The Cursillo Movement consists of proclaiming the best news of the best reality: that God loves us in Christ loves us, communicated by the best medium that is friendship, to the best of each one, that is his being a person, their ability to conviction and belief and constancy.”*

In few words, friendship is the most human medium, to convey the message of the love and friendship of God in Jesus Christ, to all those around us.

### **Christ - Person - Friendship**

De Colores