



# National Cursillo® Movement

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## Kerygma and Postcursillo

*Source: Presented by Joachim Thong Le at the National Cursillo Encounter held at Lewis University in the Diocese of Joliet – August 6, 2016.*

In his blog, "Community in Mission," Msgr. Charles Pope responded to a number of people who had asked him to expand on the meaning of the term "kerygma". The term κήρυγμα, (Kerugma) is a Greek word meaning "proclamation." The Greek word, κηρύσσω, (kerusso), means "herald," or one who proclaims. Thus, Kerygma is what is proclaimed.

As the apostles began the work preaching and proclaiming Christ, they exhorted a message that was both basic and simple. More extended teaching or instruction (Διδαχή, (didache), in Greek) would come later, after baptism. But the initial proclamation of Christ was to the point. Fr. Modesto Lewis Perez, Spiritual Advisor to the Cursillo Movement in Los Angeles Archdiocese, in his Rollo on "Kerygma," has added, "the gospel KERYGMA is that impassioned first announcement of the "Good News" that transforms and brings a person to the decision to entrust themselves to Jesus Christ by faith (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 25).

"That proclamation requires individuals who, themselves, are living, Spirit-filled witnesses of the Good News. In other words, it needs "agents of change." They are Christians who, with every word, and with their very lives (of faith, hope and charity), proclaim the greatest of all possible news: God loves you! Christ came into the world for you! "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"! (*Christifidelis Laici*, no. 34).

Father Modesto, therefore, has asserted "there is no question in his mind that in its foundational charism, its methodology and its structures, the Cursillo Movement forms part of the *Prophetic Ministry* of the Church, and that within this *Prophetic Ministry*, Cursillos is engaged in the Church's KERYGMA."

Pope Benedict XVI, in his Message for the 45th World Communications Day, declared: "The truth of the Gospel is not something to be consumed or used superficially; rather it is a gift that calls for a free response. Even when it is proclaimed in the virtual space of the web, the Gospel demands to be incarnated in the real world and linked to the real faces of our brothers and sisters, those with whom we share our daily lives. Direct human relations always remain fundamental for the transmission of the faith!"

The Cursillo Movement, with its unique and simple methodology, and through friendship, is a great experience and a useful tool for the New Evangelization. It gives Cursillistas an opportunity for a very personal encounter with Jesus, and after the Weekend they re-enter their environment while keeping their constant encounter with Jesus through an on-going conversion in the POST CURSILLO.

Father Modesto Perez asserts the KERYGMATIC proclamation in the Cursillo Movement begins in the PRE-CURSILLO, through what we have already heard is that KOINONIA or friendship raised to a supernatural level. It is this friendship that leads others to want to come and meet and know the Lord. It continues in the CURSILLO through that same friendship and DIAKONIA, or service, that is made a living and present reality on the team and all its members. It constantly renews and grows in the POST-CURSILLO, as we continue to nurture and mature in our own friendships with God and neighbor in our Group Reunions and Ultreyas. It is made possible by our Piety, Study and Action.

Ultimately, our Kerygmatic Proclamation of the Word must lead us to an ever deepening faith in our Lord Jesus Christ that allows us to see more clearly our interdependence as human beings, and as brothers and sisters in Christ.

In PIETY, which is an ever more intimate relationship as friends with our Lord that renews, strengthens and develops our faith, Mr. Eduardo Bonnín keeps reminding us of "being Christian rather than doing Christian things", because such apostolic works come naturally and consequentially.

In Our Sunday Visitor edition dated March 13th, 2016, in its News Analysis, was published a conversation between journalist Gretchen R. Crowe and the Most Reverend Mark J. Seitz, Bishop of El Paso, Texas, who tried to clarify the so-called dispute between Pope Francis and Presidential candidate Donald Trump. The bishop said, "For many people in this country, to be a Christian simply means that we say, "well, yes, I believe in God, and I believe that Jesus is the Son of God." But for us, to be Christian implies actions. It implies that we are seeking to live in accord with the teachings and the actions of Jesus, and that we understand that's a constant challenge and struggle. Pope Francis, when he's asked to define himself, he says, "I am a sinner." So none of us is "Christian" in the fullest sense of the word. None of us is - because we have not always applied the teachings and actions of Jesus in our daily lives."

According to Vatican Radio, during his homily at the daily morning Mass this past May 24th, Pope Francis said, "if we wish to be holy, we need to convert every day. Our Holy Father stressed four elements are needed for us to be 'holy' everyday: conversion, courage, hope, and grace. The Pope emphasized that the conversion we are called to is a continuous effort toward cleansing the heart, for example "...if you're able to not speak ill of another, you're on the right path to becoming saintly. It's so easy! I know that you never speak ill of others, do you? Little things ... 'I want to criticize a neighbor, a workmate': bite your tongue a bit. The tongue will swell a bit, but your spirit will be holier on this journey. The path to holiness is simple. With fortitude, the Pope continued, "Holiness is a journey; holiness cannot be bought. It cannot be sold. It cannot be given away. Holiness is a journey to God's presence that I must make: no one else can do it in my name. I can pray for someone to be holy, but he's the one who has to work towards [holiness], not me." Everyday holiness can be "anonymous," but not timid, since "the path to holiness takes courage. In encounters with Jesus we obtain courage 'that hopes.' Our Holy Father says, "We cannot achieve holiness on our own," "No, it is a grace. Being good, being saintly, going every day a little 'step forward' in the Christian life is a grace of God and we have to ask for it. In a journey, one must take with courage, with hope and with the willingness

to receive this grace. And hope: the hope of the journey.” "Metanoia" is often spoken of in our Cursillo Movement. It is a radical change of mind and heart.

Extending my ongoing conversion from my Three-Day Cursillo Weekend, I have been making more concerted efforts to attend the 6:30am Holy Mass each weekday, and spend one Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament afterwards. Since the death of my eldest son, John Baptist, two days after Christmas last year, my wife has since joined me for the Holy Mass. I drop her at work after Mass, and return for my daily Holy Hour, until the next Holy Mass at 9:00 a.m. Additionally, my wife and I try to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Holy Rosary every night. Thanks to our frequent encounters with God through the Eucharist and daily prayers, my wife and I have experienced a better relationship with God and with each other, and less struggle with daily trivial matters. Questions surrounding our son's death linger less frequently. My acts of piety have improved significantly, and consequently, my duties in Cursillo tasks and other charity works, like the fund-raising campaign in support of the human rights activists and prisoners of conscience in my homeland, Vietnam, have not been affected by this tragic loss of my beloved firstborn. On the contrary, they have been accomplished with joy and continued reverence. I even completed my article "Christianity and Christians" for our February 2016 National Newsletter, shortly after my son's burial.

My family may never fully understand why God allowed my son to succumb to his sudden illness. Thanks be to God, St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans (8:28), reminds me, "we know that God is always at work for the good of everyone who loves Him. They are the ones God has chosen for His purpose, and he has always known who his chosen ones would be." Obviously, there will always be times that call for faith and patience.

Several developments before and after my son's rest in peace have amazed his wife, Catherine, and her Buddhist family members. She was converted to Catholicism nearly 20 years ago before their wedding. In October last year, they sold their house within just 10 days, while other houses in his neighborhood were still lingering on the market. He had started looking for a new house closer to his in-laws, so that his wife's mother could help take care of his third son, who had been a surprise blessing in August of last year, 14 years after his second son's birth.

In early November, my son John found a house, and he managed to put the purchase in escrow. During escrow, before Thanksgiving Day, John was admitted into the hospital because of his breathing difficulty. X-rays showed his left lung completely white-out at that time, but the cause was still unknown then. Unfortunately, both his dream of living in the new home and his health collapsed altogether before close of escrow, causing them to lose the house.

After John's burial, his wife asked the same real estate agent to keep looking for another house. In early March this year, the agent found some houses for sale, but unfortunately, they were competitively bid up over the owner's listed sale price. The real estate agent was worried about not being able to come through for them. He shared that he had gone to the cemetery to speak over John's grave about his commitment to the real estate situation. To his surprise, a week later, he came across a house for sale, but not listed on the market (MLS) yet. He quietly made arrangements with the owner to allow John's wife and her family members to inspect that house. Both she and her family were encouraged, because it was in a much better neighborhood than the

one that had been in escrow. The house was in good condition and ready to move in. The owner consented to sell at market price after he had heard about the family's situation. Finally, Catherine and her three boys got their house, but sadly, without their father.

Similarly, in her story, "Blessings in Disguise," in the June 2016 issue of *Word Among Us Meditations*, Teresa Tomeo disclosed that she had been unexpectedly fired as a successful local, broadcast journalist. She wrote, "As it turned out, the firing was a huge blessing in disguise, and she concluded, "if we're honest with ourselves, we can look back over our lives and realize that the important lessons are learned most frequently from mistakes, disappointments, interrupted plans, and even tragedies. Suffering often confronts us with the need to make key choices."

Father Modesto said that *STUDY* is faith seeking further understanding and a deepening of that *COMMUNIO* with God and neighbor through Bible Study Classes, Friendship Groups, Ultreyas, School of Leaders, Regional and National Encounters. Piety and Study often go hand in hand with each other.

Our Catholic Faith has been strengthened in history through the Holy Scriptures, and contemporary historians with Jesus of Nazareth. St. John's Gospel shows us the Samaritan woman as the perfect role model of a Cursillista. As soon as she encountered Jesus, who helped her reflect deeply within herself when she uttered, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet!", she immediately regained courage, no longer being ashamed of her past life, and afraid of other people. She ran back to the village and joyfully proclaimed the Good News of Salvation by Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

St John the Evangelist has stated-- *God is Love*. It was out of love for mankind, and for us, in particular, that Jesus was born of a woman, leading a simple, if not poor life, and finally suffered death on a cross. Similarly, God also feels pain when we suffer. In the same way, when we love God ardently, we would naturally sacrifice ourselves, look after the poor, the marginalized, the persecuted, the prisoners of conscience, and those suffering from injustice and violations of human rights, of religious freedom, and so on.

In this Extraordinary Year of Divine Mercy, we are reminded of God's mercy in the Holy Scriptures through the story of the Prodigal Son, of King David who committed adultery and murder, but Prophet Nathan told David, "The Lord on His part has forgiven your sin, you shall not die."

Divine Mercy has been shown in innumerable occasions, especially in the lives of many saints, but most widely known is the story of St. Augustine. He was converted after 18 years of persevering prayers by his beloved mother, St. Monica. He became bishop, and was canonized as a Doctor of the Church.

The third element of the Post-Cursillo Phase is *ACTION*. It is the natural consequence of our free will response to God's love. It needs to find expression in charity towards others. A contemporary role model of humanitarian works is Dr. Rupert Neudeck, a German Catholic, who recently passed away in May this year. He was 77. Wikipedia discloses that "in 1979, Rupert Neudeck and his wife, Christel, along with a group of friends, formed the committee "A ship for

Vietnam" and chartered the commercial freighter, Cap Anamur, for a rescue mission to Southeast Asia. The mission eventually saved more than 10,000 Vietnamese boat people fleeing Vietnam, after South Vietnam was betrayed by the Free World and collapsed into the Communist regime on April 30th, 1975. He has been one of the greatest benefactors of the Vietnamese political refugees residing in West Germany and living in political asylum outside Vietnam. We have been mourning over his death with sincere gratitude.

About three years ago, I was convinced by my Friendship Group members to coordinate a fund-raising campaign in support of human rights activists and prisoners of conscience in Vietnam, presently persecuted and constantly harassed under the atrocious and brutal Communist regime, as I have mentioned earlier. As Mr. Bonnín reminds us Cursillistas that works of mercy naturally result from being Christian. Unfortunately and regrettably, this kind of charity has been condemned by quite a few Christians, clergy and laity alike, as acts of pure politics. Actually, these Christians have forgotten Prophet Isaiah's words "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon men, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners*" (Isaiah 61:1-2).

On the other hand, Father Einer Ochoa, Spiritual Advisor to the Cursillo Movement of Region XI, at its Spring 2016 Encounter, reminded us of many spiritual benefits and practical works of mercy from the Holy Eucharist. Often at Mass, as well as during the presentation of bread and wine, a collection is made or charitable gifts are brought to the altar, intertwining the strong bond between the Eucharist and the commandment to love others.

We can think of St. John Chrysostom's words in this context, "If you want to honor Christ, do it when you see Him naked, in the person of the poor. No use, if you bring silk and precious metals to the temple, and leave Christ to suffer cold and nakedness in the outside. No use, if the temple is full of golden vessels, but Christ himself is starving."

Dr. Jeff Mirus wrote an article in 2004 for *Catholic Culture.org*, entitled "*Clothes Make the Man: Christianity and Public Life*," but it is interestingly fitting in our secularized world today. He stated, "the failure to live the Faith publicly is so crippling as to cause the Faith to be lost. To the precise degree that Faith is limited to private practice, opportunities to show the relevance, inspiration and power of the Gospel are eliminated. This has two disastrous consequences: First, the social order is robbed of the graces, ideals and convictions which are essential to its health; second, individual Christians must dissemble, hiding their Faith in public, and thereby undermining their spiritual identity. This downward spiral marks the decline and eventual destruction of true civilization, which loses the power to sustain and to develop itself from within. At a certain point, only a major impetus from outside can reverse the trend. One such outside impetus is large-scale immigration, hopefully of a more vibrant group with stronger values, but here there are no guarantees." In my opinion, the current controversial immigration crisis in Europe, Australia and in our country, in particular, is a real challenge to us as Christians and a serious threat to our true civilization as well.

On perfecting the social order, Dr. Jeff Mirus worried that the goodness, truth and beauty which arise from a proper understanding of man's relationship with God have no opportunity to

improve our public life.... Consequently, all failures undermine the Faith and values of the individuals who make up the social order. He concluded with this exhortation: "Our dignity as children of God means that, first and foremost, we must express ourselves as moral actors. At the same time, our actions profoundly influence who we are as persons, and through the social order we shape over time. As persons, we are clothed by action, and these clothes do make the man."

I, myself, have resigned as national Vietnamese-speaking coordinator, but not as an apostle. Our Servant of God, Vietnamese Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, in his book "The Road of Hope", has stated that our apostolate can vary according to our ability and age, but our apostolic mission was accepted by us through our Baptism and Confirmation. Only on the Cross could Jesus say, "It is finished" (John 19:30). So it is only at our death that our mission as an apostle will be finished.

In conclusion, God sent Jesus Christ to us through Mary, our Mother, too. Now, we go to God also through our Mother. Let us pray to her and our Patron St. Paul to help us to persevere as "*apprentice Christians*" just like our beloved founder, Eduardo Bonnín, and to make our thoughts, our words and our actions truly and sincerely kerygmatic in our efforts to share with others the Good News that Jesus loves them and everyone.

Feed your Faith and your doubts will starve to death!  
De Colores and let's move on! Ultreya!