



National Cursillo® Movement

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Why We Have Cursillo

Source: Presented by Margaret Weber at the 27th National Cursillo Encounter held at Trinity University in the Archdiocese of San Antonio – July 28, 2017.

My name is Margaret Weber. I was born and raised in a rural community in central Canada and I now live in the city of Waterloo Ontario which is about an hour west of Toronto. I am married to Doug and we just celebrated our 47th wedding anniversary. We have 3 married children, 2 daughters and one son and 7 grandchildren. I thank God, every day that our children and grandchildren are all active participants in the life of the church.

I lived my Cursillo in 1985 and have been active in all areas of the movement, serving on the Diocesan and National executives. Cursillo has become my way of life.

First of all, I want to offer congratulations on your 60th anniversary and especially to those who have served the movement over the years to bring Cursillo to where it is today here in this country, in my country of Canada and also around the world. It is truly an honor and privilege to share this celebration with all of you and I look forward to making lasting friendship from our time together here in San Antonio.

Back in January when I received the invitation to come and be one of the presenters for this encounter, I was truly humbled and asked myself and my husband WHY ME? Through my prayerful discernment, I also shared the invitation with a friend of mine asking her the same question. Her response was “Our Blessed Mother Mary did not ask Why Me? but said “Thy will be done!” And so here I am as a humble servant for Christ to be His voice, His hands and His feet. I have learned over the years, He doesn’t call the equipped, He equips the called! I am assured that my friends and family are storming the heavens with prayers for all of us this weekend. And so, I want to say thank you again for allowing me to share my passion for this great movement.

“Why Do We Have Cursillo” what an amazing topic I have been given to speak about.

Eduardo Bonnín at the 3rd World Ultreya in Rome explains Cursillo this way and I quote: *“The Cursillos in Christianity, are a Movement that, by means of its own method, attempt, 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, and in freedom, people find 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”.*

Back in the 1940’s, Spain was under terrible oppression with the civil wars going on in the country at that time. Eduardo Bonnín was inspired and was given a gift, the gift of the Charism of the Cursillo and so Eduardo acted on that inspiration. Being a faithful and trustworthy steward of this

gift has passed it on to us. We too need to listen, discern and act on our inspirations as the Spirit calls us! As it says in Phil 4:13, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”*.

Cursillo has made a huge difference in the lives of millions of people throughout the world, and it has frequently been described as the gift that keeps on giving. When we receive a gift it's not until that gift is opened that we value the contents that are inside it and so as Cursillistas we too are continuously unpacking and living the beauty and the immense joy that is contained inside and what it offers to us as Children of God. As we unpack and learn more about the gift that the Cursillo movement offers us we should have the same excitement as little children when they unwrap their birthday or Christmas presents.

Those who know me will vouch that I am always wearing my “Cursillo hat”. I find it easy and natural to speak to anyone about my passion whenever the opportunity arises whether I am volunteering or talking to my friends or neighbors, or on vacation, and yes, I have been known to evangelize in the pool or over a glass of wine. After all God never takes a vacation, He is always with us. The fruits of this movement are at the center of my relationship with Jesus, my marriage, my family and my friends. Cursillo is my way of life and I want to share my passion with whoever will listen. I have been given a new focus for my life and I am not afraid to admit that I am proud to be Catholic.

Prior to my weekend, I was “a mechanical Catholic”, just going through the motions. My weekends now consist of Ultreya every Saturday and Holy Mass on Sunday and the other days I evangelize whenever and wherever I can.

My mind and heart was changed from one who doubted her value in life to one who knows she is loved unconditionally by a loving God and Father and I was given new friends to share the journey with. I want to share my experience and to pass it on to all those that I encounter in my daily life. We are all a part of His eternal plan and an important link in God's family chain.

The gift of Cursillo helped me to untangle much confusion in my life at that time. I was given new eyes, new eyes to see Christ in those around me and to always be thankful for the many blessings that I receive each day.

Life is a pilgrimage, a journey to the Father through Christ, with the help of Mary and all the saints, bringing our brothers and sisters along with us. The Lord has blessed me so many times by opening doors and windows of opportunity to grow in my faith. I am always ready and open to accept His invitations to do His work, knowing that He is working through me by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. I am His instrument and if He brings me to it, He will bring me through it. I have to keep reminding myself to “Be Patient, God is not through with me yet!”

Often at night when I reflect on my day, I am deeply moved and humbled when I realize the number of people who have filled my heart that day and the hearts that I in turn may have influenced through my love and kindness. I could never accomplish this on my own; it is only through Christ's love that I am able to open my heart to others in love.

We have many relationships: family, friends, neighbors and co-workers with different talents, personalities, vocations and responsibilities. We don't live in a vacuum or a cave. We need other human beings to survive. We are each an important part of the larger puzzle of our life, each piece is different, but each contributing to the overall picture in its own way.

We have been initiated into the Body of Christ, the church, through our Baptism; through our Baptism we are given a share in the mission of Christ to make God's love known to all people by taking Jesus "out of the tabernacle", so to speak and into the environments outside of the church building through our love, action, friendship and our prayers. Prayer sustains me and gives me courage and strength. In today's fast paced lives, whenever and wherever we go we rely on our GPS's for getting us to our destination. In our spiritual life, we also need to use a GPS, "God's Pathway Saves". Without prayer, we can get lost! In Cursillo, we rely on Palanca, the prayers and sacrifices offered on behalf of others and for each other. When prayer becomes our habit, miracles become our lifestyle. We can do all things through Him who strengthens me. The power of prayer is amazing!

We are His Children and He loves us unconditionally and has destined us for happiness. We have been given a COG degree, "Child of God" and this is a degree we didn't have to pay tuition for or even have to study for. It is a gift freely given to each of us.

We are assembled here in San Antonia this weekend, because God has brought us together in love and friendship and we want to go deeper into our understanding of the Cursillo movement, as friends on a journey. I am quite certain we will develop lifelong friendships if we have brought with us our dedication, enthusiasm and spirit of love. My hope and prayer is that we can return back home to infect and set our movements on fire with a lot of enthusiasm generated from this encounter.

I am sure all of you have beautiful conversion stories from your weekends. My Cursillo experience and I am sure most of you will say the same, is that it was a life changing event. If you ask those who knew me before my Cursillo, I was shy, introverted and very insecure. I didn't really know where I stood in my relationship with God, let alone that He truly loved me for who I am with all my warts and sinfulness. I was given new eyes to see Christ in those around me, and also to accept them as children of God with their own talents and abilities. Even before I began to understand the impact Cursillo would have on my spiritual life, I recognized that I had been given a special gift. I was able to untangle the confusion around so many things, like the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, or that abortion and birth control were unacceptable in the eyes of the Catholic Church. I began to understand those things that were really important.

Cursillo showed me that I could be loved and could freely love in return. I learned that I was valuable and could have real friends. I was blessed with so many special people that came into my life. What began that weekend was what I had been searching for my whole life and that was friendships and it is because of Father Steve, the Spiritual Advisor on my weekend who became a very special friend and it was through his love and encouragement that set me on the path, to be the person I am today. He was a man of deep faith and loved Cursillo and it rubbed off on me. He was the Spiritual Advisor for 25 weekends and I know he guided many other Cursillistas on their faith journeys as well. Recently, I was doing some office decluttering and I found a thank you

card that Father Steve had written to me. The card said, “Dear Margaret, I thank God for using me to help you grow”. So, I guess through our friendship, we helped each other to grow. I was blessed with another gift from God as Father Steve developed cancer and passed away on my birthday, 11 years ago. What a birthday present! I know that his spirit is with me here today.

Through my ongoing involvement, attending conferences, workshops, and continuous study, it has been a very fulfilled journey. I was blessed on 2 occasions to visit Mallorca, to be in the presence of Eduardo and I was fortunate to live with some of the Mallorcan people while I was visiting and was immersed in their culture. Through all of these experiences, I have come closer to the authentic vision of the movement, bringing me to an experience of God’s love and grace, through the normality of everyday life.

So, let us look at the **Essence and Purpose** and the **Mentality**.

By Essence we mean, what something IS. It’s the real core of something. Sometimes however, circumstances can change but the identity of the inner core; its essence always remains the same and is unchangeable.

Father Frank Salmani, in his book *Whom Shall I Send*, points out that “the Founder was led by the Holy Spirit and the Cursillo Movement is God’s gift to the Church.” He writes, “To tamper with its essence is to interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit. The spirit gave us this movement with its method. We have no right to tamper with it. The Cursillo did not invent what is fundamental to being a Christian. We are simply carrying out the mission of Christ, which is the mission of the Church.” And so, we must respect what has been given to us by the Holy Spirit.

The hierarchy of the church has recognized that the Cursillo in Christianity was born from a Charism. The gift of the Charism was given to the person of Eduardo Bonnín. Eduardo being the faithful and trustworthy steward of this gift has passed it on to us as we make our pilgrimage through life. Cursillo was a gift from God, given to the Church at a specific time in history for a specific reason. It was given in response to a need to re-Christianize the world and this need still exists today, maybe more now than ever before.

Christ is at the core of Cursillo. Therefore, as Cursillistas, what we do, who we are and how we live should be of Christ, in Christ and for Christ.

We have come to understand that Cursillo is about *Christ, the Person and the Method of Friendship*. It is a method through which we learn to live the Gospel in the everyday circumstances of our lives. It is a roadmap for our lives as Christians – to live the Gospel as lay persons, *communicating the best news of the best reality that God in Christ loves us. The good news of God’s love is communicated by the best means which is friendship and this love is directed towards the person’s being and their capacity for conviction, decision and constancy.* This genuine love and friendship is what helps us to live what is fundamental to being Christian in life.

God’s love penetrates the innermost being of the person in a profound manner, not because of what they do, but by the very core of who they are. It’s about “BEING” Christian all the time. We

can achieve many good and worthy things throughout our lifetime but unless we do them out of love, our doing is of no value.

Mathew Kelly, a world renowned Catholic speaker, challenges us to be “The Best Version of Ourselves.” We can’t change yesterday, today is a present and tomorrow is a mystery. He says, “We can build a better world by building a better YOU!” Accepting the love of God that dwells within us can take away our restlessness and leave us with the conviction of who we are as children of God. We are each loved unconditionally for who we are.

Pope Francis in one of his recent homilies, said we should look at the future “You”. The future is made up of many “YOU’S”. Each and everyone’s existence is connected to others. Life flows through our relationships with others. Our lives are made up of daily encounters with other people. Life is about various interactions. We need each other and we can build a better future by standing together. Each and every one of us is so special, we are irreplaceable in the eyes of God. Life is not merely time passing by us because each and every day is important.

What we need to do is to start a revolution of tenderness, kindness and love, a movement that starts in the heart. We should let our light and love shine wherever we go. Each and every one of us can become a bright candle and bring light to the darkness if we truly believe that light can overcome darkness.

The characteristic element of Cursillo which is friendship promotes 3 encounters. The first *encounter with self* is the first step toward personal fulfillment according to one’s own vocation, that is, to know who I am. This in turn is the key to the other 2 encounters. The *encounter with Christ* is the real core of the Christian Life. The *encounter with others* occurs naturally through relationships as we share our Christian lives with each other.

Cursillo is a path to go beyond knowledge to conviction, from conviction to life lived and from life lived to sharing God’s love with others in friendship.

The essence and intrinsic nature of the Cursillo is the workings of the Holy Spirit and in order to remain true to its Charism we must not tamper with it. The essence is Christ as our brother and friend, as the center of our life. The essence is about “the person” knowing that he is loved unconditionally by God and finally the essence is friendship, which is the best means to communicate God’s love to the persons we encounter each and every day of our lives in our environments.

Purpose and Method

Our goal as Christians and Cursillistas is to move a person from where they are to where they could be; from human to fully human, from alive to fully alive in recognition, acknowledgement and acceptance of their true identity and dignity as beloved children of God. We, however, must recognize the freedom of the person and acknowledge their free will to choose and make their own choices. We must see each person as a special individual and respond to them where they are at in their life; their particular circumstances and their environment. We must meet them in their individual circumstances and in the ordinary marketplace of their lives, where they live, work and play and to make it possible for every person to come to the realization that God loves them

personally and intimately. Thus, through the witness of their own conversion, their joy, and actions, their sincerity and conviction and their friendship will move them to share this with others.

Living and sharing what is fundamental to being Christian, is to feel loved and to feel capable of loving in return. The purpose of the Cursillo is to communicate God's love and to facilitate the path to make it possible for others to experience it. St. Paul tells us that "There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God". We are all made in the image of God, who is love!

This is what I experienced from the ongoing support of my Spiritual Advisor and all my Cursillista friends over the years. I became confident knowing I was loved for who I was. This has given me the courage and enthusiasm to be a servant for Christ these past 32 years.

Cursillo is not only about the 3-Day weekend but it's a stepping stone to a new way of life and seeing life as Christ sees it. Unfortunately, the method of Cursillo has been used for many other purposes over the years that are not as originally intended. Some may think that the purpose of Cursillo is a way to recruit enthusiastic and generous people to serve in a particular apostolate, not taking the freedom of the person into account but only their usefulness.

Cursillo is not to make more workers or leaders in the church. This will happen naturally when one realizes that they are valuable and genuinely are an important piece to the whole puzzle. The purpose is to BE CHRISTIAN at all times, in the church and in our normal environments. Through friendship and encouragement, leadership roles in the church may happen naturally.

We are custodians of the Cursillo movement and we are the instruments that the Lord works through to be leaders who think with the mentality of seeing everything from the reality of God's love and friendship. We need to be influencers in our society by our joy and love for one another. God has given us free will which allows us to think, reason and make choices, to act or not to act wherever God has placed us to be in our individual environment, *to bloom where we're planted* in the normality of everyday life.

Cursillo is not intended to satisfy the hunger for God but to create a hunger for Him with a true desire to serve. Saint Pope John Paul II reminded us that "*the most important task for Christians is not so much to improve the world as to improve oneself*" realizing that by improving oneself, the world improves in the square meter which surrounds us, infecting the next meter and so on to continue to infect the world. Can you imagine how wonderful it would be if the whole world would experience Cursillo and be on fire for Christ, spreading love and friendship?

We tend to live in a fragrance-free society these days because of so many allergies. However, there is a fragrance that does not cause anyone to have an allergic reaction. It is a person's distinct natural fragrance of their heart. By this I mean, the way a person acts and lives, that emanates a certain fragrance. Have you ever been around someone that gave you a sense of peace and calmness? I certainly have and I believe it is the *fragrance of Christ* within that person. I felt this during my time being with the Mallorcan people. When I arrived we were strangers, but it certainly did not last for long. Friendship was as natural as putting on a coat. There was a sense of warmth and security. I know it was the love of Christ that was seeping out of their pores like a beautiful

fragrance. It certainly felt wonderful. We are all called to spread our fragrance. We never know when or how our fragrance will affect those it touches. What fragrance are you?

The method of the Cursillo is to *live a balanced life of Piety, Study and Action*. It's like a 3-legged stool. If one leg is missing, the stool will not stand firm. Piety is growing in relationship with God by every means available and recognizing our closest moments to Christ. Study is growing in knowledge of God. Action is living out what is learned through Piety and Study.

The mentality of Cursillo is that if Christ is in us, we will share our Christ-like attitude and be open to the workings of the Holy Spirit. Our role in the mission of the church is to infuse the Christian spirit into our mentality, through our behavior, our laws and the community in which we live by making a positive difference whenever we are able to do so by reaching out to others in friendship, compassion and love.

It is in the natural environments of family, neighborhood and work that Cursillistas are called to live out their spirituality, not preaching the Good News but BEING THE GOOD NEWS, being Christ in the world. The spirituality of Cursillo is based on friendship with Christ, and with the brothers and sisters who are placed on the journey together.

We are stewards of this gift of Cursillo. We can identify with the early apostles whom Jesus chose to share the gospel message. The apostles were unprepared, some doubted, others were fearful and they lacked the full knowledge and courage of what Jesus was asking of them. The only assurance they knew was that they were being called to witness to His word and to carry on Jesus's mission and work in the world. As Cursillistas we too are called to BE stewards, to BE the Good News in the square meter that surrounds us.

We are not expected to preach on the street corners but we are called to be the spark that ignites the world for Christ doing the little things that God is calling us to do. Like Saint Mother Teresa says, "Doing the little things but with much love!" It can simply be a smile or a helping hand or a kind gesture. There are lots of little things that God is calling us to do, and by answering his call, He will complete the bigger picture. I am just the SPARK while God is the flame. He uses us little sparks to set the blaze.

God knows us as we are, warts and all. He sees all that we do and knows all we think. He knows our deepest and darkest secrets and He loves us as we are. Patiently, He knocks at the door of our hearts and waits for us to respond to His invitations.

The method of Cursillo is Precursillo, Cursillo Weekend and Postcursillo. The Precursillo is where we make a friend, be a friend and bring that friend to Christ. This is the beginning of the friendship stage as we pray and prepare our friend to make the weekend. The Cursillo Weekend is the bridge. Unfortunately, some movements put so much emphasis on the bridge. We call this *weekenditis!* However, if the foundation of the bridge is not secure, meaning the pillars of the Precursillo and Postcursillo are unstable, then the bridge will prove faulty and it will not last.

All parts of the method are important but the Postcursillo is where most movements fall short. By continuing the friendship that has started in the Precursillo, it is the duty as sponsors and as team

to walk with these new friends and help to get them into Group Reunion and attend the Ultreya where the tripod of piety, study and action is carried out.

I think we can truthfully say that in most areas the Postcursillo needs a lot of work. It is great to sponsor and bring people to the weekend but if we don't continue the friendship after the weekend, we leave them high and dry and their environment may not change as they should. The method continues as the Postcursillo becomes the Precursillo for those coming to the bridge and who may attend the next weekend. We need to realize that Cursillo is not just about having a nice weekend experience. We all need to practice perseverance in the Postcursillo with forming Group Reunions. The Group Reunion is friendship elevated to the highest level, friendship that is converted into a permanent actual grace.

Eduardo Bonnín says that "Reunions of the Group are not made so that there might be people to assist at the next Cursillos, but Cursillos are made so that there will be people who can make Group Reunion". This certainly emphasizes the importance of the Postcursillo.

Prior to my Cursillo, my faith life was somewhat mechanical. I seemed to be doing just what I had to do. Mass on Sunday that was pretty much it. I was a busy stay at home mom of our 3 children. Then suddenly our family was struck with some unexpected health issues and mid-life crisis, and we were lost and devastated. I was lonely, yearning and searching for comfort and consolation and meaning to my life.

By the grace of God, I was invited to a Cursillo weekend and it was there that I found what I was looking for. It was friendship! Living the first encounter, I got to know myself. Delving into my inner self is something I had not done before. It was no surprise that I didn't like what I found there. I knew then that some things definitely needed to change. It was certainly a wake-up call for me! I met friends during the weekend who listened, who loved and cared for me. I developed some genuine friendships that are still strong today. But most importantly, I discovered a friendship with Christ. When I think of my first encounter with Christ as a personal friend, it was truly a moving experience I will never forget.

Over the years, I have come to realize that through friendship, we can overcome our weaknesses and manage obstacles that are put in our path. A true friendship can take us from where we were to where we should be. I now know that I really didn't have genuine friends prior to my Cursillo because Christ was not always a part of the equation or the friendship. There is no value high enough of what friendship can mean to a person. The element of friendship in Cursillo is so vital that Eduardo has been quoted as saying "If there is no friendship, there is no Cursillo!"

God is love and it is love that is at the core of friendship. When Christ is the common denominator there is a unique bond that unites us, and brings us to a deeper relationship. It is this unconditional love that can carry us through any of our daily challenges that we encounter.

We need to ask ourselves some very important questions and evaluate the future of the Cursillo. Have we used the Gift of Cursillo to its fullest potential? Do I put effort into all of its parts? Have I sponsored people for a weekend lately? Do I continue to walk with them after the weekend? Have I helped those I sponsored to belong to a Group Reunion? Do I take those I have sponsored

to the Ultreya? Do I do my part in being a leader in the movement? Do I study the Charism and attend School of Leaders, or has my lack of commitment to the Cursillo method dampened the fire within me that was set ablaze on my weekend? Has your fire literally gone out?

Each and every person plays an important role in rekindling the flame. We can point fingers and try to determine why Cursillo seems to be dying in certain areas of the country but it really starts with each one of us. We all have to take responsibility. We cannot leave it to the others.

The Holy Spirit has given us the whole package. We just need to unwrap and use it as it was intended. We also have to do our part by inviting Cursillistas back to the movement. Show them they are missed and loved and that we want to share in their faith journeys. The love and support of the community is so vital in keeping Cursillo alive.

Rekindling the flame starts with each one of us. We can ignite the world by our love. We must be enthusiastic about what the Cursillo methodology can be and pass that spark on to others. It, however, means giving of our time without expecting any reward. The benefits will come back to us naturally. We need to concentrate on forming Group Reunions and faithfully attend Ultreya and School of Leaders. It means challenging others with loving kindness to do more to reignite the life of our individual movements.

For me, my Group Reunion friends are like sisters and my weekly Ultreya friends are like extended family. I look forward to sharing our Christian lives which keep me on the right path. We spend the winter months in Panama City Beach, Florida. About 10 years ago, by the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit we met some people at the church that we attend and we started talking about Cursillo. There was no active Cursillo movement in the area at the time. So, after a few conversations over coffee, this led us to starting an Ultreya at the church for the “Snowbirds”, or the Cursillistas who were spending the winter in the area. Sometimes we’ve also had local parishioners come out because they were curious, what Cursillo was all about. This has led to developing friendships from across the country. Each year when we gather again in January it’s like there has been no time lapse at all. We continue to share our faith journeys, our joys and sometimes each other’s pain of sickness or death. This has led some of us to do prison ministry or nursing home music ministry, with Jesus as the common denominator working together to bring the joy of Christ to those we encounter.

There are many movements in Canada and I believe around the world that seem to be struggling. We have to ask ourselves this question: Have we deviated from the original Charism of the Cursillo?

In chapter VI of Eduardo Bonnín’s Spiritual Testament, he writes *“If we compare the Cursillo Movement to a tree, we are happy to see that it has grown, but it also hurts us to see that in some places, no doubt with the best of intentions, they have taken the tree of the Cursillo for a Christmas tree and have been hanging lights and decorations – their favorite brilliant ideas – and have gradually been spoiling its clear and simple profile.”*

Have we put so much effort into the “How” of doing and organizing instead of understanding the “Why”? Have we spent so much time decorating the Christmas tree of Cursillo that we have not left room to see Christ at the top?

In Canada, we have embraced the Foundational Charism and have been working with the Mallorcan people to get back to the original Charism. We have been on a journey since 1992 to study and discover the Charism given to Eduardo and to embrace what was intended. We have tried to un-decorate the Christmas tree! My diocese of Hamilton implemented the Mallorcan weekend Step-by-Step model last year and I was blessed to serve as the Rectora. The Cursillo Weekend was authentic and genuine and proved much more effective with its simplicity. I hope and pray that your movements here in the US will also discover the gift of the original Charism by embracing this Step-by-Step model. The comment from the Spiritual Director at the end of last year's weekend, and by the way, he has worked several weekends, said he found that there was definitely more depth and less hype, and more candidates came for spiritual direction and reconciliation, some came more than once. With ample free time in the schedule, he did not go home totally exhausted after the weekend. He is convinced of this Step-by-Step method.

I had the opportunity to meet Eduardo on 3 occasions, twice in Mallorca and once in Canada. I saw firsthand how he treated each person as being special. He treated everyone with dignity and respect as if they were the only person in the room. Is this not how Jesus would have treated those in his presence?

My last visit to Mallorca was the III conversations of Cala Figuera and I had a memorable experience. A friend and I were sitting at a table eating and Eduardo and his companion asked if they could join us for lunch. We were just a little ecstatic to be in his presence as everyone was trying to get near him throughout the weekend. Everyone wanted to smell his fragrance! It was much like wanting to touch the hem of Jesus' garment.

At that time, my daughter was expecting her 3rd child and unfortunately just that morning, I received word that she had miscarried her baby. During lunch when I shared this news with Eduardo, he looked at me with his baby blue eyes which were filled with compassion and love, I knew then that I was looking into the eyes of a saint! He folded his hands and turned his eyes up toward heaven as he prayed. I know he was praying for my daughter and her baby. We shared a beautiful meal together and he was very jovial and just so natural. Then of course, he got a sugar packet and made and signed, one of his paper (*pajarito*) birds for me to give to my daughter. She still cherishes this memento to this day. She's not a Cursillista yet but I am working on her.

Eduardo was a symbol of friendship by his attentiveness to each person, treating them with dignity and respect. Being in the presence of any of the Mallorcan people was amazing. They just made you feel so welcome and special. Love and friendship oozes out of their pores so naturally. It does not seem to take any effort at all. As Cursillistas, we should all have this mentality. If you want a friend, it's simple - BE A FRIEND!

It is not Cursillo that will change the world, but it is the person whom the Cursillo experience has freed to become fully alive in God. These are the persons who will bring about change in the world one person at a time.

We often come to the end of a Cursillo weekend, a conference or encounter and say, "Isn't it so sad that this is coming to an end?" Well, instead it should be just the opposite; we should be thinking of it as the beginning of a new chapter, having new insights going home filled with great

enthusiasm. We know that enthusiasm is infectious and so events like this should be a real shot in the arm for all of us.

When a seed is planted, one does not know what will happen but it can grow into something really great and wonderful. *The world is beautiful, people are important and life is worth living.* Every person is important in God's eyes. We must live the Gospel not every day but every moment. The gospel must be in our hearts and on our minds at all times, so that Christ can be seen clearly through us.

We must commit ourselves to this vision working together to advance this great work started by God through Eduardo. We cannot allow ourselves to become discouraged or disheartened. We need to pray and stay connected and support each other. We need to build bridges of understanding and of LOVE from one heart to another. If we can win hearts, the heads will soon follow.

My Cursillo cross that I wear is a reminder that Christ is counting on me, Jesus called me to Cursillo and I responded. I have learned to love myself for who I am and who He created me to be. By the grace of God, He changed me from who I was to the person, fully alive that I am today. I am a better wife, mother, grandmother, volunteer or friend because of my Cursillo way of life. I am a person fully alive in Christ through friendship with myself, with Jesus and with all those I encounter along my pilgrimage.

My life has not always been easy and has had its challenges. I came from a relatively poor family who endured many struggles along the way. My father died from leukemia when I was only 6 and I am the youngest of a family of 8, 4 boys and 4 girls. We didn't have much in material wealth and living on a small farm which was a lot of hard work for us to sustain our family and put food on the table, but my mother had faith, a precious gift which she passed on to her children.

I was a victim of physical and sexual abuse as a child and through my teen years I became a bit of a rebel. I can honestly say that it was my husband who rescued me at the age of 16. It has been through the Grace of God and Cursillo, that I have been able to forgive my abusers and have overcome the lack of confidence and self-worth that this had caused me.

Today, I know that I am a child of God with a COG degree. I know that I am loved unconditionally by Him. I don't have any official University or College degrees, but I have a degree in Motherhood, a degree in listening and a degree in friendship and I am forever grateful for the blessings I receive each and every day from my God, my family and my friends. I was one of the faraway but found my way back when I was invited to make the Cursillo. I found myself, Christ and friends in Christ. I try each day with God's help, to BE the Good News. Sometimes I fail but I know that my friend Jesus will always welcome me back.

Cursillo for the past 32 years has been my passion and my way of life because this is where I see Christ in the friends and family who walk the journey with me and encourage and sustain me on a daily basis. Cursillo is a way of life to reach the destination of our life pilgrimage in the company of friends.

We came here this weekend to go deeper and to learn more about Cursillo, to be with friends, to make friends and to share our lives in Christ so that when we go back home we will infect those we come in contact by our enthusiasm and love.

In today's world of so much unrest, lack of morals and full of all the "isms" of materialism, individualism and the list could go on. We are being called by God to be Stewards of the Gospel, children of God and to help bring more souls to Christ. We are called to be saints, in the square meter that surrounds us, to infuse our fragrance of love and friendship and "Be Not Afraid", for HE is always with us. I also believe that if He brings us to it He will bring us through it.

From little acorns, mighty oaks can grow. From Mallorca to the USA, to Canada and around the world the same seed was sown. Some has fallen on fertile soil and some on rocky ground and some in the weeds. In 2018, we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary in the Diocese of Hamilton and I am blessed that the seeds planted on the soil in my area of Canada has fallen on fertile ground and that Cursillo is going strong despite all the other movements of the Catholic Church. We give thanks to the pioneers of our country who have stayed true to the course and have pointed our diocese in the right direction.

In summary, there is a dire need to bring love back to the world. We can do this by loving one person at a time. By our baptism we are called to carry on the mission of the church, to BE the light of Christ, to infect one person at a time with God's love, to evangelize the moveable square meter that surrounds us by putting on the mind of Christ and always being the best "You" possible. Then, through friendship we become the fragrance that will infuse those God has placed in our midst with joy, His Light and His love.

Don't go home following this encounter all excited to change your family and friends but ask God to change YOU first. As Mahatma Ghandi once said so eloquently, "Become the change you want to see in the world."

So WHY do we have Cursillo? Through its Essence, Purpose and Mentality, as children of God we live our lives infecting those in the square meter that surrounds us with our enthusiasm of the Charism of the Cursillo as our way of life with peace, joy and most of all love. Cursillo is based on friendships, with self, Christ and others.

No friendships, no Cursillo!

CHRIST IS COUNTING ON ME and YOU!

God Bless you all, Jesus Loves you and so do I!