



National Cursillo® Movement

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Cursillo – Past, Present, and Future

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

De Colores! What a great joy listening to the witness of our friends who lived the very first Cursillo in the United States 60 years ago. Your presence is really a De Colores! to all of us here!

I lived my Cursillo a little bit later than Fr. Jasso, Br. Louis, Br. Lorenzo, Br. Gregorio... only 50 years apart ☺ in the Diocese of San Jose, CA in August 2007. So, I am about to celebrate my 10th anniversary next month. I still consider myself an apprentice Cursillista. ☺ I didn't have a chance to meet our founder Eduardo Bonnín and I was kind of jealous when quite a lot of my friends met Eduardo personally for 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, 2 months, etc. Until when I visited Eduardo's tomb during my Cursillo de Cursillos in Mallorca in 2015, I shared with him my joy of coming all the way from the USA to Mallorca to visit him the 1st time in my life. But he told me he visited me first, 2 years before I visited him! I was perplexed and thinking about that during the Mass at the Capuchin church and asked myself "How come?" Then I remembered back in 2013, when Josephine Oates, a NCC volunteer, turned the storage room into my office at the National Cursillo Center in Jarrell, TX, she hung a picture of Eduardo Bonnín and a picture of Jesus on the left and right of my desk.

Then I understood what he meant. Amazingly, I saw that same picture of Jesus in Eduardo's office! That was a very close moment with Eduardo and we were connected! I called him uncle Bonnín



since then! Now counting backward to 2013, I've been with uncle Bonnín for more than 4 years. Now I hope I won't make you feel jealous ☺ Now I can see with my spiritual eyes what I didn't see before: the Cursillo friendship has no boundary at all; now I can make friends with lots of Cursillistas who are on the 5th Day! Now Eduardo Bonnín can be with you anywhere and anytime. Please invite Eduardo and Jesus to your group reunion. Of course, Jesus and Eduardo are present right here right now, don't you think?

I found great joy after browsing through the 60-year history of the Cursillo in the USA. What a blessing and achievement! 60 years ago, the Cursillo started with just 16 Cursillistas and now it grew to more than one million! Let's rewind the video of the Cursillo history to the beginning and taste the fruits of Cursillo in the USA:

Cursillo Achievements

1957 - First Cursillo held in Waco, TX in May.

1961 - First Cursillo in English held in San Angelo, TX.

1961 - First Cursillos held in San Francisco, Gary, Lansing, and Gallup.

- 1962 Cursillos held in Brooklyn, Saginaw, Cincinnati, Miami, Chicago, Detroit, Newark, Baltimore, Grand Rapids, Kansas City, Los Angeles and Boston.
- 1963 First Cursillo in English held in Los Angeles, CA
- 1965 National Movement established in Kansas City with the formation of a National Secretariat.
- 1966 National Office established in Lansing, MI.
- 1969 National Office moved to Reno, NV.
- 1971 First National Encounter held in Notre Dame.
- 1971 First Filipino Cursillo held in San Francisco, CA.
- 1972 National Office and Center established in Dallas, TX.
- 1973 Over 130 dioceses had Cursillo.
- 1980 Formation of the International Cursillo Movement (OMCC).
- 1980 First Korean Cursillo held in Chicago.
- 1980 First Spanish Cursillos de Cursillos in Los Angeles, CA.
- 1981 First Vietnamese Cursillo held in Lafayette, LA and then spreading to Orange, CA.
- 1982 25th Anniversary of the USA Cursillo Movement. An estimated 600,000 persons have lived Cursillo.
- 1986 First Native American Cursillo held in Colvine Reservation, Spokane, WA.
- 1990 First Chinese Cursillo held in Los Angeles, CA.
- 1993 The National Secretariat transitioned from 12 members to ~25 members representing the language groups within the 12 Regions of National Cursillo.
- 2002 1st Annual National Evangelization Walk.
- 2003 The National Secretariat made a unanimous decision to transition the US Cursillo towards the Foundational Charism. This happened after Tom Sarg, Executive Directors and 3 National Language Coordinators, Jorge Barceló, Victor Lugo and Joachim Le, traveled to Mallorca to visit Eduardo Bonnín, Founder of Cursillo. Tom took the brave stand to announce Eduardo as the one founder of Cursillo, and to guide our movement on the right path to the original charism. Tom planned to be with us at this celebration event but the Lord called him to his 5th Day in May 2017. I believe Tom is here in spirit. We invited his wife, Vicky Sarg as a special guest to our event. Let's welcome Vicky!
- 2006 A new Leaders Manual and Cursillo Manual were published which were more in line with Cursillo in Mallorca.
- 2007 The 50th Anniversary of the USA Cursillo Movement and 17th National Encounter were celebrated in Arlington, TX. An estimated 1,000,000 people have lived Cursillo.
- 2009 The first English Cursillos de Cursillos was held in the United States in Miami, FL.
- 2010 The National Cursillo Center relocated from Dallas, TX to Jarrell, TX.
- 2012 An on-line Cursillo Resource Center was created for all Cursillistas who want to read Cursillo-related articles, listen to MP3 audio or view videos about the different material and rollos presented at National Encounters.
- 2014 EWTN interviewed Cursillo servant leaders about the Charism, mentality, essence, purpose and method.
- 2016 National Encounter had participants of 7 language groups.
- 2016 All members of the National Secretariat and Regional Service Teams participated in a Cursillo de Cursillos in Phoenix, AZ.
- 2016 A revised Spiritual Advisor's Manual was published.

- 2017 Sixteen (16) National Cursillo delegates participated in the historic Convocation of Catholic Leaders with approximately 3,500 other Catholic leaders, laity and clergy in Orlando, FL.
- 2017 The 60th Anniversary of the USA Cursillo Movement and 27th National Encounter were celebrated in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, TX.
- 2017 The first Spiritual Advisors Workshop will be held in Fresno, CA in September.

We have conducted hundreds of CDCs and workshops in Spanish, English and Vietnamese.

Taking a snap shot as of today, we have 239 affiliated Diocesan Cursillo Movements, 12 re-establishing Cursillo Movements with 28 Regional Coordinators with more than 1.1 million Cursillistas with an addition of about 10 thousand new Cursillistas each year!

We also have numerous books from FEBA in our catalog and the latest ones are *Manifesto* in English and Spanish, English *Reflections II*, revised translation of the USA English edition of *1st Conversation of Carla Figuera*. Cef Aguillon is working on the English eBook collection of Eduardo Bonnín's writings and Vincent Pham is working hard with his translation team to publish FEBA materials in Vietnamese ... We have a lot of work to do and we're doing great!

Now moving forward and starting a new chapter, what are we focusing on? What should we change or improve? Again, I asked uncle Eduardo and got 2 action words from him **“Go Deep!”** I reflected on these 2 words and I found it so true! We must go deep into our Charism, understand the history and mentality of the founder and most importantly LIVE it with conviction 24/7. Our charism is alive, coming from the Holy Spirit! If we don't live it and breath it, we are just Cursillo scholars. We are not Cursillistas!

When we live our Charism to the fullest we become contagious in a good sense. In one private audience with Jesus during my adoration hour praying for victims of Ebola outbreak in Africa back in 2014, Jesus gave me an interesting vision: what if we can be as effective as Ebola virus in spreading the “Good news that God in Christ loves us” to everyone we touch in our moveable square meter? We will surely set the world on fire! And who are trying to isolate us? The devils!

We need to go deep into the 3 encounters with Christ, self and others. How deep is our intimacy with our Lord? Do we really love Jesus as He desires? Until aching? Did we go deep enough into our heart and find a poisonous snake which is our ego and crush its head? Did we really go deep enough to see the seed of love God planted in an unbearable friend? Did we go deep enough into the supernatural friendship and forgive a friend who hurt us? Did we frame that friend and label him or her “incurable” and refused to reconcile or refuse to press the reset button to start the friendship fresh again as little children do? I am studying the “environment” of 3-5 years old kids and I am amazed on how quick they play with each other again after a big fight. Their simple and pure hearts have no room for hatred, anger or grudges. It's very easy for them to say sorry or even they don't say sorry, they are already forgiven by their friends and they just start playing again. Isn't that amazing? Now I understand why Jesus commanded us to be like children as a condition to enter His Kingdom.

I asked Jesus what do want me to say for the next chapter of Cursillo in the USA? Then I received a cardiograph image. This is just the normal cardiograph but Jesus asked me to go deep into his heart and take his cardiograph. What I saw made me weep! We are his Body, correct? I realize that



anything that is not from LOVE (ego, hatred, anger, division, etc.) creates an extra pulse like a thorn piercing his Heart! How may thorns did I see? A lot! Previously, I thought what I have done or what I have failed to do only affect certain people, but in fact it's affecting everyone in the Mystical Body of Christ, the whole Body of Christ!

I asked him “Why, Lord? Why did you take a huge risk allowing us sinners to be parts of your Body, piercing your Hearts with our sins?” I received 1 Word from Him: **“LOVE!”**. Jesus wants harmony and unity so that every part of his Body receives the same pulse, the pulse of Love that synchronizes every activity of our lives.

My friends, I am one of the 16 delegates of the National Cursillo Movement attending the Convocation of Catholic Leaders in Orlando from July 1 – 4 and I felt so blessed to be part of the congregation and I was filled with great joy seeing a “normal cardiograph” of Jesus during these 3 days. Everyone was synchronized to Jesus’ heart beats which is the rhythm of Love. The joy of the Convocation felt very much like the joy experienced during a National Cursillo Encounter! I was amazed that Cursillo is widely recognized by Catholic leaders, clergy and laity. We’re on the right path!

Pope Francis has challenged the Church to continue to go out, to go forth from our comfort zone, to the *peripheries* in search of those who are in need of the light of the Gospel and in need of the Lord Jesus Christ and of his mercy and grace through the Church, his Body.

Pope Francis defines the “Spirit-filled evangelizer” in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Leaders are people of prayer in tune with God’s voice. Leaders are conscious of the mission field around them and willing to go beyond their comfort zone to embrace and engage others. Leaders actively seek out the lost, like the shepherd who left ninety-nine and went in search of the lost sheep to bring them home. Leaders are well-formed for the work of ministry and apostolate: emotionally, intellectually, spiritually and culturally. In addition to these personal qualities, missionary disciples follow a four-step journey as leaders: regular reflection of their *encounter* with Christ, *accompanying* others on their journey toward Christ, making the *community* a place of welcome and fellowship, and finally, the leaders are *sent* to evangelize outside the walls of their communities and churches.

I’d like to share a video with you about Cardinal Tobin’s reflection on the 3rd day of the Convocation. It’s challenging but it’s indeed what we need to move forward as missionary disciples: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLpTzvCOJa7DCMn8i1azajJtVO3JQeV1Ku&v=7x1APIxLHm0>

Cardinal Tobin's transcript:

The Holy Father shortly after his election called the Secretary of State Cardinal with a simple request. He said, "I want to go to Lampedusa." Now I'm sure some of you've heard of Lampedusa. It's an island in the Mediterranean Sea, technically the territory of Italy but actually much closer to North Africa. It's a scene of great tragedy! It's the port of entry for thousands of immigrants and refugees. The seas around Lampedusa have been the graveyard for thousands of people. In 2015, I think it had the distinction of becoming the deadliest migrant route in the world. Now the Cardinal was a little shocked at this request and I think he tried to talk him out of it. He said: "Look, you've just been elected. I'm not sure you want to be scooting out of Rome so quickly... and what's more, this is your first trip and you're going to be sending a message. Is this the message you want to send? Why don't you think about it?" So, he did. Several days later he called up the Cardinal again and he said, "I want to go to Lampedusa." and the Cardinal could see that his mind was pretty much made up so he said, "All right, fine, fine! We'll go to Lampedusa but you know, these trips can't be arranged from one day to the next. There's media, there's security, there're all sorts of logistics... maybe in six months... better a year we'll be ready". The following week the Cardinal received a phone call; but this time it was from the vice president of Alitalia, the national airlines, and he said kind of hesitantly, "I think you might want to know that a passenger by the name of Jorge Bergoglio has booked a seat on the Roma-Lampedusa flight." And they moved! So, on July the 8th, 2013 three and a half months after his election, four and a half months before he would publish the Joy of the Gospel, Jorge Bergoglio better known as Francis the Bishop of Rome went to Lampedusa where he thanked the harried people of that Island for the welcome that they offered the stranger despite their meager resources. He celebrated the Eucharist where he denounced the traffickers and prayed for the dead. What did he say? He repeated the first two questions that God asked of human beings after the fall. He asked Adam, "Where are you?" and to Adam's son - Cain, He asked "Where is your brother?"... 'Where are you?'... 'Where is your brother?' The answers did not come easily because of the sin. We might ask a question of Francis, "Why did you want to go to Lampedusa? After all you just arrived and this is your trip; why pick that place?" Reading carefully the Joy of the Gospel we can expect that Francis would offer three reasons. First, his election had improved his peripheral vision; he saw things that he didn't see before. I would imagine as the Archbishop of Buenos Aires in la Cantina, he did not have much contact with refugees or migrants. Now as the Holy Father, he would look around and see people that others would overlook; see a reality that was easily brushed off; see the results of a globalization of indifference and what he would see pierced his heart! He said on July 8th 2013, "looking at the people over an altar that was made of the remains of some of those boats" he said, "when I first heard of this latest tragedy a few weeks ago and realized it happens all too frequently, it has constantly come back to me like a painful thorn in my heart!" And so as missionary disciples, we might ask ourselves what do we see as we look around? How good is our peripheral vision where is God opening a door and beckoning us to enter? What pierces our hearts and leads us to weep? The second reason Francis might offer for this choice of Lampedusa at the start of his Pontificate was he had to practice what he would preach. In the Joy of the Gospel, Francis insists that the fundamental conversion that is needed today is a missionary conversion. It is a re-evaluation of everything about the Church and everything about us; the structures, the activities so that mission and outreach to people in the love of Jesus is clearly the first priority, the first priority not just on our papers but in our budgets because the budget after all is a theological statement.

Sometimes the Pope calls it a pastoral conversion but the emphasis is always on mission, on going out and he says in the Joy of the Gospel, "Since I am called to put into practice what I ask of others, I too must think about a conversion of the papacy. It is my duty as the Bishop of Rome to be open to suggestions what can help make the exercise of my ministry more faithful to the meaning which Jesus Christ wished to give it and the present needs of evaluation of evangelization; no less than all the members of the church the Pope would not be constrained by the shackles of custom or empty pragmatism." Thirdly, Francis went to Lampedusa to find the suffering face of Christ; he reminds us that all of us are called to offer to others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his Word and his strength and gives meaning to our lives. The Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others with their physical presence which challenges us with their pain and they're pleased with their joys which infect us in our close and continuous interaction. True faith in the Son of God is inseparable from self-giving, from membership in the community, from service, from reconciliation with others. The Son of God that becoming flesh summoned us to the revolution of tenderness. The Joy of the Gospel insists that our response of love to Jesus's love of us and our willingness to share that love with others is the most important reality in our lives and not just when we are doing something 'religious'. Are there things in your life or in my life: worries, pressures, distractions, habits, fears that blot out our awareness of our life in Christ for much of the time? Are we like really agnostic who pray in the morning and then take charge of the rest of the day? Are we blind to the suffering face of Christ that is around us? For once again as Francis reminds us true faith in the Son of God is inseparable from self-giving from our membership in the community, from service and from reconciliation with others.

If community is so essential to a full Christian life how can we help it to happen? Can you name some ways in which your parish has been able to offer real community to people? If you are already in a small community, God bless you! And I know it's very important to you; perhaps it's your family or a special circle of friends or coworkers in the vineyard. Does it remain inclusive and open to others? And finally as missionary disciples standing by the Cross of Christ, in so many situations today, are we obsessed with immediate results that make it hard for us to tolerate anything that smacks of this disagreement, possible failure, criticism or the cross? And the biggest threat of all, says Francis, takes shape! It is that gray pragmatism of the daily life of the Church in which all appears to proceed normally while in reality faith is wearing down and denigrating, degenerating into small-mindedness. Francis would ask us to have good peripheral vision: to go out to the ones who are forgotten, to the ones who are unseen, to bring with us our friendship of Jesus, to share with them their suffering, their pain and their fear. Jesus would have us go with his cup. My friend, Fr. Dan Groody, from the University of Notre Dame let me use this cup: a cup that is used at the altar, but a cup that represents the cup of suffering! The wood and the colored chips come from the ships of Lampedusa; this is the cup of suffering that Jesus did not want to drink and asked his Father if it would be possible to make it pass. But this is also the cup in which the suffering and pain of this world is transformed by the faithful love of the Father. This is the cup that we share; this is the cup that makes us the Church; this is the vision the pierced hearts; the Quick Reaction, the courageous decisions that make us missionary disciples. And we asked our Mother Mary who was the first disciple of her son and a missionary seeing things that others did not see, treasuring things in her heart and standing by the Cross to help us drink the suffering that evangelization necessarily demands with the confidence that it will be transformed by God's love into the cup of blessing that we raise and Thanksgiving and to Him who gives us love, who makes

us Church, who has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light, who left beside the glory so that He would become one of us so that we might be one with God. To Him be glory now and forever in the Church. Amen.

Yes, we need to have that mentality of our Holy Father: to step out of our comfort zone, take charge in a sense of urgency, set aside differences and become ONE in the Mystical Body of Christ. I am so glad to announce that the National Secretariat and National Staff are rewriting the Articles of Operation with the language of Love. Here are our action items:

- Encourage all Secretariats, Diocesan, Regional and National, to promote, live and share the art of friendship.
- Encourage all dioceses to provide a Cursillo de Cursillos for their community.
- Encourage all Secretariats, Diocesan, Regional and National, to continue discerning and advancing towards the authentic Charism of Cursillos in Christianity in a climate of Friendship. As a result, Cursillistas will finally understand the simplicity of the Foundational Charism and start projecting it through their own lives in the normality of their own Movable Square Meter.
- Encourage all Secretariats, Diocesan, Regional and National, to move away from rules, mandates, control, etc. that impede the Charism of Cursillo to a criterion that contributes to the freedom of the person.
- Encourage all Secretariats, Diocesan, Regional and National, to have a dialogue about “Succession Planning” to identify the leaders who will replace us in the future.
- Encourage all Secretariats, Diocesan, Regional and National, to strive in becoming “faithful and trustworthy stewards” of the gift of the Charism.

In the words of Bishop Eusebio Elizondo during the National Encounter: “The Charism of Cursillo must be an attraction, not an imposition. We are the instruments of the Charism, but it is God's Charism”.

During the Memorial Mass of St. Mary Magdalene on July 22, I was struck with the following 2 verses:

- I have seen the Lord. (John 20:18)
- The love of Christ impels us, so that those who live may live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was raised. (2 Corinthians 5:14,15)

Thank you all for your love, your conviction and your living witness to the beauty of our Charism. Let's proclaim with conviction: “I have seen the Lord! I have tasted the sweetness of the Lord and the tenderness of the Lord!”

De Colores!

Love never fails. (1 Cor 13:8)