



National Cursillo® Movement

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Secretariat and School of Leaders: Reaching a Unity of Purpose and Understanding

Presented by Rodrigo Becerra, Region X Spanish Coordinator at the 28th National Cursillo Encounter held at Seattle University in the Archdiocese of Seattle – August 18, 2018.

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Good Morning
- b. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, enkindle in us the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be created.
- c. And You shall renew the face of the earth.
- d. O God, who by the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations. Through Christ our Lord,
- e. Amen
- f. Our Father
- g. Hail Mary
- h. St Paul the Apostle pray for us.
- i. Eduardo Bonnin, intercede for us
- j. My name is Rodrigo Becerra, I come from Region 10, from the diocese of Phoenix, AZ where I lived the cursillo #591 in February 1996. I am originally from the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. I'm married, in fact my wife and I, together have accumulated a total of 50 ears of marriage, yes, I'm serious, she says she's been married for 25 years and I curiously enough also say that's been 25 years, therefore nobody can deny that 25 plus 25 adds up to 50, right? Well, sorry for my math skills. And in following with the math skills, let me tell you that between my wife and I have two children, the two children she has are the same as the ones I have, isn't these, four? Well I guess I am no good with math at all, let me tell you instead that our oldest son's name is Erik, he's 22 and our youngest daughter Diana is 16 and in between them there's a German shepherd and its name is Towy (towy means "boy" in tarahumaran language, a native's language from the Chihuahua, Mex Rocky Mountains) and we adopted it but don't tell him that ok?
- k. When I lived my cursillo, I was just 21, I had barely broken out of the egg shell, but let me tell you, ever since that day I understood that God had given me life for a purpose, the problem is that I still haven't been able to figure out what is that purpose; but oh well, I'm convinced that God is helping me fulfill my purpose somehow.
- l. And it may be slightly possible that part of that purpose is the reason for being here today.
- m. Because I was asked to give a talk regarding SECRETARIAT AND SCHOOL OF LEADERS UNITY OF PURPOSE AND UNDERSTANDING
- n. When I receive this invitation I was surprised, I wonder how it could be possible that after 74 years of the Cursillo's existence to not have a clear understanding of the purpose of the Secretariat and the School of Leaders.

- o. And the answer was that, indeed there has been an understanding, but that everybody gets it in different ways, and that's way we need to reach UNITY AND UNDERSTANDING of their PURPOSE, therefore let's get on with it, how much time do I have left?
- p. Ok, allow me to tell you that in order to get a good starting point, that is that if we consider ourselves to be leaders of the Cursillo Movement, we must have a clear understanding that the School of Leaders and the Secretariat are the only two structures of SERVICE that the MCC has.
- q. And I wish to put an emphasis on the word "S-E-R-V-I-C-E" ... But I don't have time right now, maybe later.
- r. After I lived my cursillo, I learned that there was a Secretariat and those who belonged to it where the people in charge of manipulating the cursillo community... I mean they were the organizer, sorry. I did some investigative chores and asked how much I had to pay to be part of this "group" All I can say right now is that I ended up becoming part of the Secretariat.
- s. When I took part on the first meetings I immediately understood which way the water flows, or as the saying goes (translated from a Spanish saying) I began to notice on what side the iguana chews. I was kind of lost on why these members of the Secretariat were not active in the School of Leaders.
- t. And I was thinking to myself this could be heaven, or this could be hell... I mean, I was confused, because it was my understanding that School of Leaders and Secretariat are indivisible, one depends on the other and vice versa.
- u. It was my understanding that neither one of these structures can function independently.
- v. My understanding is that they are like two gears together that moved by the Grace of God generate the Movement of the Cursillos machinery.
- w. That the leaders who are part of this structures are the guardians and promoters of the Foundational Charism, Mentality, essence, Purpose and Methodology.
- x. I then asked myself this question, Is the burden of the law too heavy... or they ignore the doctrine?
- y. I believe that in order to achieve UNITY, we first must have the UNDERSTANDING and that the sum of this two will give us the UNITY AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PURPOSE.
- z. Therefore, it is not possible to have UNITY between the School and the Secretariat if there's no UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR PURPOSE.
- aa. So, like the mechanic would say, "let's get the parts together"
- bb. Let's start by finding out the meaning of UNITY, and according to google, where if it's not known, it makes it up, Unity means: "The property that things have of not being divisible or fragmentable without the possibility to be altered or destroyed". This means that if our Secretariats and Schools are not UNITED, we are altering or destroying them, period.
- cc. And what is the meaning of UNDERSTANDING? I went to google again, and it says that it means: (my search in Spanish gave me this definition) "The action to Understand".
- dd. This means that even Google knows that we must rely on one of our pillars of our "LIFE OF GRACE" ... ACCION, and I say that a Cursillo Leader, who is part of

a Secretariat and those active in the School of Leaders, is not only bound to practice Action, but also piety and Study to better understand the PURPOSE.

- ee. First thing we need in order to find UNITY is for The Secretariat as well as the School of Leaders be comprised of Leaders who are living in Grace, who's piety, Action and Study are all the way to the top, for their thermometer found in their Service Sheet, to be to the 100 as we say in Chihuahua.
- ff. In the Leaders manual we read that a Movement is as good as his Leaders.
- gg. The Foundational Charism must be the spot light that illuminates the UNDERSTANDING and the UNITY between the School and the Secretariat.
- hh. Although, in order to understand the Purpose of these two structures, I consider it very important to know a few truths that are offered by the Foundational Charism.
- ii. In order to find Unity, we must first look for the truth, and Truth shall make us free, and once we find the truth, we must treasure it and be loyal to that truth.
- jj. Let's see which truths are that we need to understand regarding the Foundational Charism of the Cursillo Movement, not without warning you that I will not go deep into each of these truths, all I want to do is bring them up to light.

2. CHARISMATIC DIMENSION OF THE MOVEMENT

The very first truth that we come across is that the Movement has a "Charismatic dimension"

Why charismatic?

Well, let's first find out what 's the meaning for Charism:

a. Charism

- i. The Catechism of the Catholic Church in the number #798 we read: "The Holy Spirit is the principal of every vital and truly saving action in each part of the body".
- ii. "Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the church, ordered as they are to her building up, the good of men, and to the needs of the world". #799
- iii. Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the church as well". #800
- iv. Therefore, a Charism is gift given by God to whomever He pleases, but not for that person's benefit, but for the benefit of the community and the Church.
- v. This leads me to the conclusion that the MCC is a... Charism, a gift of the Holy Spirit, and for this the MCC is Charismatic.

b. FOUNDATIONAL

Now that we have clarified the first truth, let's take a look at the second one:

The truth of the foundational Charism.

Buy the foundational Charism we understand that the MCC is:

- i. A MOVEMENT with a FOUNDER

1. The Cursillo Charism or the gift of the Holy Spirit, was given to Eduardo Bonnín, our Founder, in the decade of 1940 after a profound study of the environment.
2. It was based on that study that the essence, purpose and all of the methodology of the Cursillo Movement was born.
3. around 15 years or so, bishop Joseph Cordes who was at that time the vice-president of the pontifical council for the laity, interviewed Eduardo Bonnín and confirmed that he was in fact the true founder of the MCC, and if you don't like this, you may go and read this interview in a document called "Signs of Hope" posted in the MCC's national website.
4. If we have a Foundational Charism is because it relates to the founder. In 1998, Pope John Paul II and cardinal Ratzinger who later became Pope Benedict XVI, both took on the theme of the movements in general saying: "the passage from the foundational Charism to the movement takes place through the mysterious attraction that the founder holds for all those who take part in their spiritual experience".

The next truth is that the MCC is:

ii. A LAY MOVEMENT

1. THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT is a lay movement, and it's precisely that parting from this lay apostolate that the idea was brought up to the "ordained" and they blessed the Cursillo not with one, but with both hands.
2. Eduardo Bonnín made an emphasis that Cursillo is an ecclesial lay movement where priests contribute in their prime role. Eduardo continued by saying that Cursillo may only persevere and to grow with the perfect and intimate unity between priests and laity.
3. I want to make it clear that by saying this we are not denying the role that the priests have in life and in the church.

Another truth regarding the MCC is that it has:

3. A MENTALITY, AN ESSENCE, A PURPOSE AND A METHOD

- a. The Mentality responds to the WHY of Cursillo and it consists of:
 - i. Proclaiming the best news of the best reality.
 1. That God, in Jesus Christ, loves us.
 - ii. And it Shall be communicated by the best means
 1. Friendship
 - iii. Towards the best of each one
 1. Conviction – Conviction of God's love.
 2. Decision, the decision to follow Christ must be of free will
 3. Constancy, to follow Christ is not an easy task, but it can be done one day at a time.
 - iv. Because men lived and still lives with their backs turned to God.

- v. There was no hunger for God, and as we all can see, there's still no hunger for God.
- vi. Therefore, if there was no hunger for God, there was no need to satisfy it, but rather, to awaken it, and once awakened, keeping it progressively.
- vii. I have always said, the day men stop turning their backs to God, the day men become hungry for God, then and only then Cursillo shall change its mentality, and along with it its purpose, methodology and its essence. In the meantime, let's not waste our time on making changes to the Charism of Cursillos.

b. Essence (responds to the What is it)

Essence is what doesn't change, the elements that without them there would be Cursillo.

The essence of the Charism of Cursillo is CHRIST, THE PERSON AND THE METHOD OF FRIENDSHIP.

- i. The essence of the Charism is Christ, because the Christ whom we proclaim, the Christ that Loves us, is the same Christ we find in the Gospel, head of the church, the living Christ, the normal Christ and the Christ who is near us that, is the one we have been always trying to incarnate, express and present with full conviction and joy in our Cursillos.
 - 1. The Living Christ
 - a. Because He lives in us and He lives in the others, we are Christ to those around us, and those around us are Christ to us.
 - 2. The Normal Christ
 - a. Because He is with us on our everyday life, everywhere in our mobile square meter.
 - 3. The Christ near us
 - a. Because Christ is not only within us but is within the most inner part of our being.
- ii. As I was saying, the essence of the Charism is Christ and also the person
 - 1. The human being as a rational and social animal, subject to rights and realities, transcendent as conditioned, is capable of LOVE, and only in love can he feel accomplished and happy.
 - 2. Because the evangelization is performed on people and not in horses, mules, oxen, although sometimes I have my doubts.
 - 3. A person, my brothers and sisters, is someone who himself capable of loving and worthy of being loved.

This is what got me impressed in my Cursillo, because I grew up believing that I was not worthy of being loved and I didn't feel worthy of loving anybody; my parents got divorced for whatever reason, they left me at my grandparent's home since I was practically a baby, I am not complaining my mother, nor will I ever complain to her for this, because I know she must have had very powerful reasons for doing it and her decision was based on the fact that she wanted what was best for me.

But the way I was treated by my grandma was truly hell for me, and to top it off, in my neighborhood and at school was not any better, I was being victim of the famous Bulling and when you are a child, the world seems so small and the options seem so few, I came to the point of considering suicide as an escape from this suffocating life, but thanks be to God, because He was always with me and thanks to a wonderful wife He gave me I discovered the love for life and thanks to God too for the Cursillo that now I feel the love for those I'm surrounded by and worthy of loving those I meet in my journey.

iii. I was saying that the Essence of the Charism is also the Method of Friendship

1. Because Friendship is the most genuine human form and most evangelical way of communication among men.
2. It's the way God has to form a relationship with men and
3. The best way men have to form a relationship with God and with others.
4. Friendship was not something I believed in, because as it is, people are too fast at judging without knowing you, or that people may look to you because it benefits them, but the friendship that I have discovered in Cursillo is a gift so big that only God could have been able to invent it; but we degrade it so easily when we don't take the time to get to know the people around us.
5. The essence and Purpose of the Cursillo can only be grasped, understood and comprehended in an environment of true friendship.
6. The MCC offers to the person a new way of life that emerges from the encounter with himself, with Christ and with the others.
7. And through this is how we can achieve the Purpose of cursillo

c. PURPOSE (what is it for)

Anybody who is sincerely concerned for the Glory of God, can easily notice that there exists among the baptized a truly alarming proportion of souls who live in and off sin. Men have lost the awareness of sin, and women too. For this we recognize as I had previously mentioned it when speaking of Mentality, that the root of the problem is that life has ceased being Christian.

This is why the MCC has:

- i. First and foremost an Immediate Purpose:
 1. To take the person to the Grace of God
 2. By providing a foundation to live what is fundamental for being Christian.
 - a. Experienced though three essential encounters
 - i. The encounter with oneself
 - ii. The encounter with Christ
 - iii. And the encounter with the others.
- ii. And as an Ultimate Purpose
 1. To vertebrae Christianity in society.

- a. The apostolate – wrote a Belgian writer M. Lemerger – must aspire to build the church before saving souls.
- b. This means that Cursillo does not tend to increase the number of practicing devotees, nor to convert incredulous nor jerk people. Neither to save lost souls, nor to increase the participants for existing organizations, nor to create any new ones, but instead to vertebrae Christianity, which is nothing else than for people become the leaven of the immediate environment that surrounds them, as we say in Cursillo, of their mobile square meter, practicing the method of friendship as Catholics who throughout their life can set the Christian tone to a life that has stopped being Christian.

d. Method

In order to be able to achieve this Purpose the MCC proposes a Method, or a system

The Method of Cursillo makes it possible to achieve its Purpose by the way of its three phases (Precursillo, Cursillo and Poscursillo) so, in order for the Movement to be authentic and for its Purpose to be fulfilled, it's absolutely necessary to apply the totality of its Method in coherence with the Purpose of each phase.

i. Precursillo

- 1. In this phase, the person is prepared and catapulted trough friendship
- 2. We must be looking primarily for people according to their:
 - a. Personality, that it may be profound
 - b. Circumstance, clean or cleansable
- 3. If they have:
 - a. Who can help them
 - b. Whom they can help
 - c. Self-control
 - d. Baptized Catholics

This was as far as Precursillo is concerned,

Now in regard to

ii. Cursillo

- 1. Is the joyful proclamation of being Christian
- 2. Is the living of what is Fundamental to be Christian

iii. Poscursillo

- 1. The Poscursillo is an essential phase that allows each individual to constantly live what they experienced in the Cursillo weekend.
- 2. Through the Group Reunion and Ultreyas

And this is how we come to fulfill what I was saying in regard to the Purpose of Cursillos: Bringing them to the Grace of god – Precursillo

Providing the opportunity to Live and share what is Fundamental to be Christian – Cursillo

And keeping them in a progressive conversion – Poscursillo

Now that we have made it pretty clear what is the Truth of the Foundational Charism, the truth that it is a Lay Movement and that the Movement has a Mentality, an Essence, a Purpose and a specific Method, now let's see what truth we must speak in regard to the School of Leaders and the Secretariat.

And I want to repeat what I said before, that these are the Operational Structures of S-E-R-V-I-C-E that the MCC has.

4. SCHOOL OF LEADERS

I want to speak about the School first, because this is the Cornerstone of the Movement. The mere term of School is a term that has gotten a lot of people confused.

- a. For many, the word 'School' gives them a vision where there are teachers and students, where some are giving instruction while the others are learning, and in speaking in the context of Cursillos, this cannot be much farther from the truth.
 - i. The School is not and has never been a place where the most veteran cursillistas or with more experience, share their knowledge with the new ones or the less experienced.
 - ii. In Cursillos, School means a "School of Thought" where the leaders gather around to share ideas and philosophies, where together they explore and deepen their understanding and gain wisdom and knowledge from one another.
 - iii. This is where the Cursillista saying becomes alive, "Everyone have something to teach, and everyone have something to learn"
 - iv. The School is the Structure of Service whose solely purpose is to serve the Cursillo Community preparing and perfecting the Ultreya and taking the pulse and encouraging all the Group Reunions on top of planning and organizing everything related to the Movement.

One day I made a phone call to a friend who had missed several School of Leader's sessions, and he mentioned that he stopped attending because he couldn't learn anything, that maybe this thing about being a leader was not something for him, and he told me that in his whole life, he had never felt anything like what he felt in front of the blessed sacrament during his cursillo weekend, what he felt in his heart, changed him complete and would never forget that moment.

I answered him by saying that what we do at the School of leaders, was not necessarily to teach, but rather that we gather with the sole purpose to do everything that's in our power so that other people can someday be in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and have the opportunity to feel the lord in their heart... bring them closer to the Grace of God.

- v. As I was saying, then, membership is comprised of Lay people and Clergy.
- vi. These members are before anything, truly friends, who know each other, love each other, understand each other.

- vii. This group of friends aspires to dig deep into the Mentality, Purpose and understanding of the method, where they are not trying to teach by preaching but by applying the kerygmatic proclamation, bringing the message of Christ, giving the living testimony of the essence of the Charism, doing their best to be in a state of Grace, practicing their Piety, Study and Action.
- viii. Keeping themselves in a state of progressive conversion through the Group Reunion and Ultreya.
- ix. In a nutshell, the purpose of the School of Leaders is to be responsible that the foundational Charism gets to be known, understood, lived and put to practice, all so that the Leaders:
 - 1. Make the Cursillo's mentality part of their lives.
 - 2. They themselves become the essence of Cursillo, because they are a Christ, they are a Person, and they are Friendship.
 - 3. This is how they fulfill the MCC's Purpose
 - 4. Applying its method, because they live it, they share it, they understand it and they spread it.

5. SECRETARIAT

There is also some truth to be told in relation to the Secretariat:

- a. The Secretariat is first and foremost a group of SERVANTS for the Movement, and as I say a group of Servants, I mean a group that serves to all cursillistas.
 - i. They are the Servants to the Servants
 - ii. Unfortunately, and quite frequently it becomes a control tower
 - 1. A place of prestige
 - 2. Instead of being a place where committed leaders act together to find ways to guide the Movement
 - iii. They bear the responsibility of the well-being and performance of the School of Leaders and of the Movement in general.
 - 1. They make sure the School of Leaders can accomplish its duties through each one of the Movement Phases:
 - a. Precursillo
 - b. Cursillo
 - c. Poscursillo
 - 2. They guarantee the unity of the message and the freedom of the cursillistas.
- b. In accord with the vision of our Founder (Eduardo Bonnin),
 - i. The Secretariat exists to:
 - 1. Simplify
 - 2. Facilitate
 - 3. Make possible the living of what is Fundamentally Christian.
 - 4. And to be the GUARDIANS of the purity of the Charism of Cursillo.
- c. They are a group of Leaders who are brought forward by the School of Leaders community.
 - i. Therefore, they naturally are already a group of friends, who live in a Group Reunion climate.

- ii. They know, admire, understand and respect one another.
- iii. In the School of Leaders, they must have shown their ability, competence, spirit of service, use and understanding of the Method, humility, gift of discernment and sanctity.
- iv. The Secretariat is a community of leadership within the School of Leaders community.

6. CONCLUSION

When I find out that there is no UNITY between the Secretariat and the School of Leaders, I can't fathom to understand, how can this be possible? As I just mentioned, the leaders from the Secretariat are Active members of the School of Leaders, with all the qualifications I just mentioned.

The conclusion I can draw is that there's no understanding, neither about the Purpose of each of these Structures, nor the Purpose of the Cursillo Movement, it's my hope that with this Rollo, I might have just at least awakened the hunger and curiosity to learn and understand better our beautiful Cursillo Movement,

Before I finish I just want to make a few recommendations:

- a. **FIRST:** Deepen your understanding of the Foundational Charism through
 - i. Workshops, such as
 - 1. Cursillo de Cursillos (CDC)
 - 2. National Encounters
 - 3. Regional Encounters
 - ii. Read and Study the Cursillo literature
 - 1. My Spiritual Testament
 - 2. Study of the Charism
 - 3. Eduardo Bonnin, a Christian apprentice
 - 4. History and memory of Cursillos
 - 5. History of a Charism
 - 6. Conversations of Cala Figuera
 - 7. Structure of Ideas
 - 8. Reflections
 - 9. Eduardo Bonin: 100 years biography and thinking
 - 10. And many more
- b. **SECOND**
 - i. By a life of prayer, that will take us to the discovering of the joy to live and to share the Foundational Charism with the others by the way of Love and friendship.
- c. **THIRD**
 - i. To say it simply, to live Cursillo is to live the Gospel!
 - ii. Be attentive to the people and open to the reality in which we live.
 - iii. Recognize that Eduardo is the Founder, treasure the Foundational Charism and view the signs of the times through the light of the Charism!

De Colores!