



Precursillo

Presented by Miguel Sureda, Cursillista from Mallorca, at the 29th National Cursillo Encounter held at the University of Scranton – July 20, 2019.

1. Introduction

For a long time now, I have been begging the Lord to help me hit the target with the subject that I am now presenting to you, namely the “Precursillo”.

If you have ever visited the Foundation Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló (FEBA) website and you listen to Eduardo’s voice, you will discover that when he talks about “Precursillo”, he always addresses all of us. He doesn’t just speak to the Three Day Cursillo team leaders.

Eduardo wishes that we all understand, once and for all, that **the Precursillo belongs to all of us; it is not only a mission of the team.** And if we have understood what Cursillo aims for . . . that the Best News that God loves us reach as many people as possible. We should always be in the attitude of Precursillo to ANNOUNCE AND INFECT OTHERS WITH THE JOY OF THE FAITH AND THE JOY OF FEELING BELOVED BY GOD. And, with the attitude of “Postcursillo”, we should accompany in friendship all those who have already attended a Three Day Cursillo.

2. Definition – What is the Precursillo?

The “Essence and Purpose” rollo clearly states what the Cursillo Movement is aiming for.

Well then, PRECURSILLO is the first phase of the method of Cursillo. It is the first phase of a circular movement. **The Precursillo generates the Three Day Cursillo, the Three Day Cursillo generates the Postcursillo and in turn, the Postcursillo generates Precursillo.**

3. Purpose

a. The purpose of Precursillo is the same as that of the other two phases; the Three Day Cursillo and Postcursillo.

- THAT THE GOOD NEWS THAT GOD LOVES US, IS HEARD BY AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.
- THAT NOBODY LIVES WITHOUT KNOWING THAT GOD LOVES THEM.
- THROUGH FRIENDSHIP with oneself, with God and with the brothers.

b. Precursillo is not for our friends to go to a Three Day Cursillo. The Precursillo, as well as the whole Movement, is there for our friends to discover that God loves them!

From the very beginning in Cursillo, we say that it is not about presenting ourselves as nice people and do our best to invite them to attend a Three Day Cursillo but **“to become friends with them in order to make them friends of Christ”**.

Today's man is lost and overwhelmed, and he needs to entertain himself and have a good time. His purpose in life is to have fun, without realizing that everything is set up to prevent us from thinking and to lure us into consumerism.

It is important that in our relationship with friends, they start wondering and begin to realize that "they are missing something" and that everything that entertains them is no longer satisfying, such as love, money, possessions, and that our bodies are continually being depleted.

It is about helping our friends realize that we are connected to Someone who never fails.

4. The Team of Leaders

I would like to tell you how we manage the team in Mallorca. From the beginning of Cursillo, the team is selected for each Cursillo for men and women. The Secretariat appoints a Rector(a) and this person, through prayer, looks for leaders to serve on team. The Rector(a) chooses the leaders among Cursillistas who have Group Reunion and normally attend the Ultreya. It might happen that a Cursillista cannot, temporally, attend Ultreya or have a Group Reunion, but he is really regretting not being able to share Ultreya or Group Reunion. In that case, he could also be a good Leader for the Three Day Cursillo. Of course, this would be an exception.

5. How the Precursillo Should Be

The Precursillo, like any apostolic plan, has to be: **Prayed For, Planned and Perfected.**

6. The Precursillo Has to be Prayed For

- a. Prayer is the first and most important requirement for a Three Day Cursillo to take place. Of course, we throw out the nets and put in the labor; however, if the Lord does not produce the wonder, nobody will discover that God loves them.
- b. And for this, the first step is to place the Precursillo and our action in the hands of the Lord. Prayer must prevail over all the actions of the Precursillo. The prayers of all the cursillistas in the Ultreya, the prayer of all the leaders as they prepare their rollo. Retreats or prayer are carried out by the team of leaders.

In the Precursillo, the team of leaders would have to dedicate the biggest percentage of their time praying for the spiritual success of the Three Day Cursillo, and the rest of the time getting to know the candidates and preparing the rollos.

The rollos have to be prepared but, above all, they have to be prayed for, with the conviction that the Lord will provide the spirit. Otherwise they will just be words, words well said, but they don't touch the person's heart.

- c. And of course, we count on the "Palanca and Prayers" that we request and receive from the outside, from Cursillistas all over the world. The prayers that we request and receive from parishes, convents and monasteries.

And because we are convinced of the power of prayer, we asked about 150 parishes in the Diocese of Mallorca and more than 100 convents and prayer communities on the island, for their support and prayers for the last Three Day Cursillos held in Mallorca.

7. The Precursillo Has to be Planned

- a. We have come to understand that in any task of life we should never rely on improvisation. That is why there are apostolic plans. Apostolic plans that are initiated in Group Reunions and the Ultreya. A Group Reunion and an Ultreya, without the apostolic plan of Precursillo and the attendance and support of the Postcursillo, may fall into a state of atrophy. The plan of Precursillo and Postcursillo is a plan for our life as Christians. It is a plan that begins in the Gospel. It is the commandment of Jesus: To love God and to love people.
- b. One of our failures, is that we work on Precursillo only in the weeks just before the Three Day Cursillo. We are not always looking at the person through the lens of our friendship; sometimes we are just looking for a candidate.

When Eduardo speaks of Precursillo he talks about dates and candidates.

Sometimes there is only a short time to prepare the Cursillo. This happens due to dates and other unforeseen problems, although the team of leaders, with the help of the Ultreya, have done their best to organize the Three Day Cursillo. In such a case, when it turns out that there are only 5 or 10 candidates and the Three Day Cursillo cannot be postponed, the Cursillo should not be cancelled. But of course, this is only an *exception*.

- c. What is also clear is that the exception cannot give way to stop aiming for the true goal of Cursillo, that is, that as many people as possible discover that God loves them. The Cursillo is such an uncommon gift of “generosity” towards God, towards the person and towards us, that it cannot be improvised. We believe it takes about three months if we want to prepare the Three Day Cursillo properly with its full potential so that the candidates can have a place in it.

In three months, there is enough time for personal contact with the potential candidate. This way, when Three Day Cursillo approaches, all the candidates have had one or several meetings with at least one of the team leaders and when the Cursillo begins, all the candidates are prepared and the Rector(a) and team of leaders have the appropriate and necessary knowledge of all the participants.

- d. Experience tells us that a Cursillo that is organized one or two months in advance, is a Cursillo where normally you have to work against the clock in order to have a sufficient group of candidates, and in the end resort to prayer to ask God for a miracle. And the lack of time is used to excuse ourselves by saying that the Cursillo is worth having even if there are only 5 or 10 candidates. Another excuse that is often used, is that it is not easy to find candidates and that the situation is difficult.

But the true reality is that our cities and our surroundings, perhaps more than ever before, are full of unhappy people, people who are looking for a sense of meaning in life. And each

time there are more and more depressed and distressed people who are turning to psychics or psychiatrists.

Eduardo used to say that the world has replaced the priest for the psychiatrist. The priest has always been free of charge; however, the psychiatrist costs a lot of money in order to heal the same thing, to heal the emptiness that each person has inside.

- e. We are talking about giving the Precursillo: enthusiasm, dedication and love. Either we surrender ourselves to the service of the Lord, or to the service of our laziness and our comfort.

With three months of preparation and if the Ultreya lives in a climate of Precursillo, if the team of leaders work seriously with the help and action of the entire Ultreya, you can have Three Day Cursillos with 30 participants. For this, you have to work on 50 or 60 potential candidates.

And if the Precursillo has been done as it should and the leaders know the candidates well, not just by phone, email, nor on the first night of the Three Day Cursillo but because they have met with the candidates several times and are now friends, then the work of the groups at the Three Day Cursillo is quite positive.

8. The Precursillo Has to be Perfected

- a. When Eduardo spoke about improving anything related with Cursillo, he used to say: it is not all right, if what is good, could be better.

According to Eduardo, Precursillo has to be perfectly prepared each time. Someone has said that history is a great teacher; if we have done wrong, it places us on the road to improve our work.

Remember what we said at the beginning of this talk: for our Lord and Friend Jesus we never limit ourselves to give 100 when we could give 10,000.

- b. Precursillo is about becoming friends with the candidate; therefore, we offer all our prayer, all our enthusiasm and all our love so that he can see that with the Cursillo he can find the real solution for his life.

9. The Message and Attitude in Front of the Candidate

More than talking about selection of candidates, it seems more appropriate to talk about our attitude and our words when it comes to inviting someone to a Cursillo.

a. Who Should Go to the Cursillo?

- 1. Briefly, I wish to point out what Eduardo says about **when is the right time** to go to a Three Day Cursillo. He explains this in the “Structure of Ideas” book and it is mentioned in the Precursillo talk.

Those who should not attend a Three Day Cursillo:

The candidates without personality. Candidates who are not mature enough and the unbalanced person due to some illness or vice.

2. We consider that in the cases I mentioned, it is not that they cannot go, but they will have to wait to be in better condition, because the most important thing is that the candidate knows that the Three Days of Cursillo are intense and require all their attention. And if they are immature or sick or blocked by an addiction and their mind (head) is somewhere else, it is better to wait.

In any case we have to manage these situations with love and precaution, like the surgeon who handles the scalpel, because we are dealing with people who are deeply beloved by the Lord and we have to do our best to consider all possibilities.

3. And what about the young people? Are they mature enough? In Mallorca, the young ones really give life to our Movement. In fact, we know there are some 40-year old adults that are less mature than youngsters.

Since the world's first Cursillo in 1944 it has always been a definite wish of Eduardo that the important thing is not their age but the personality of the future Cursillista.

b. How Should We Invite A Friend to Attend Cursillo?

1. To help us discern our attitude when it comes to inviting someone to a Cursillo, Eduardo tells about a personal experience he had with one Cursillista.

A Cursillista who had attended the Three Day Cursillo 30 years previously, called Eduardo. It was midnight but it was urgent that he speak to Eduardo. Although 30 years had passed without the Cursillista attending the Ultreya or having a Group Reunion, he was still carrying the seed of Cursillo when he went to Eduardo's house.

He explained to Eduardo that this same day his wife had left their home and he couldn't overcome this big problem.

"I need for her to come back home tonight, otherwise I'll make a fool of myself." Eduardo said: "You do not want her to come back tonight?"

"Yes" answered the Cursillista, "otherwise I'm going to throw myself off the balcony. She has to come back tonight". Eduardo tried to clarify and said: "If you want her to come back tonight, we can call the firemen or the police to force her back home, but you do not want her to return."

"What you want is that she might wish to come back . . . this is what you want, right? And this cannot be fixed in 1 minute."

The friend answered . . . "you are right . . . I want her to wish to come back".

Sometimes we do the same in Precursillo. We want to fill the Three Day Cursillo so we put pressure on the candidate, even telling them that if they don't attend the Cursillo

they will disappoint our friendship or Christ. What we really should want and what Jesus really wants is that they (friends/candidates) wish to attend the Three Day Cursillo. Thereby, giving respect to our friendship and to their freedom.

2. Eduardo says that the Precursillo has to be selective, not looking for the easy or difficult people. In some places, to fill a Three Day Cursillo, they invite those very good Christians that go to everything that is planned by the parish and those who are already involved in so many Christian things that they won't have time for Group Reunion or Ultreya.

And Cursillo is mainly pointing out those that need to find the Way, the Truth and the Life.

And among those who can go, Eduardo pointed first to the faraway people, the leaders in their environments. And in order to know them we have to approach them, through friendship. If we do not approach them, we will never know the emptiness they have.

Sometimes we have done the opposite. We invite people to Cursillo who have prestige, authority, a bank manager, an important lawyer to give prestige to the Cursillo Movement. It is Christ who gives prestige to Cursillo. Cursillo does not need any more prestige than the prestige of Christ.

3. The only thing that is within our hands during Precursillo is to communicate the Joy of Faith and that you are convinced that God loves you. That the Lord is alive in you by Grace and that Jesus is also in the candidate. If this is in your mind and in your heart, then when we start speaking, something important is going to happen to the person in front of you.

But if our mindset is that we have to fill the next Three Day Cursillo because it turns out that we only have 5 candidates and we need 35, then the ego kicks in, the pride and a lot of other things and lose sight of Precursillo.

What you have to inspire in the candidates is that they wish to come and for this there are many ways to achieve this. Many times, the best way is to talk to someone while those of your Group Reunion are in front of the Tabernacle because the most important thing is that God gives the Spirit to our words.

4. It is also a question of not deceiving them. One way to deceive them is to invite them to Cursillo and not journeying with them in the Postcursillo. They are deceived if we are not willing to accompany them after the Cursillo because what the Lord really wants is not that you only take them to the Cursillo, but that you love them just as the Lord has loved you.

Cursillo is a process of friendship that begins in the Precursillo. And Eduardo told us that a process of friendship is a process of acts of kindness that go from heart to heart, because friendship is fed by the small details.

5. Another way to not deceive them is to make it known where they are going and that it is not an Internet Weekend or socializing seminar but a Cursillo of Christianity where they will encounter themselves, God and the others. Instead of talking to them about joy, sometimes we talk about responsibility, sacrifice and commitment, and that doesn't work.

Eduardo said that if the Angels of Heaven had used these words: responsibility, sacrifice and commitment on Christmas Night with the Shepherds, no one would have gone to the birth of Jesus, however, the Shepherds went and even brought gifts to the Lord.

Because the Angels said to the Shepherds:

“A Savior, a liberator is born” and that was so new that some of the Shepherds should say to the other: Take care of the sheep because I am going to see what has happened.

And how do we share the great news of Cursillo to those around us?

Eduardo says that sometimes people phone a friend to invite them to a Three Day Cursillo. And then they tell them: “We have to talk more, but tomorrow I cannot because I have a meeting and the day after I have Ultreya, and the following day I will be away . . . And so, the candidate thinks: And you are inviting me . . . to this busy nightmare?”

6. Finally, we know that Eduardo said that the Cursillo is directed, above all, to those far from the Lord, to those rejected by Society. We know of Eduardo's lack of sleep going after friends addicted to alcohol or drugs and also after prisoners. Once, in his last years, Eduardo confessed to a great friend of mine: “Sometimes I enjoy more going to the prison than going to Cursillo”.

And talking about inviting the unfortunate people of society to a Cursillo, he warned:

“To approach a miserable person without feeling miserable oneself, creates a kind of pride that is horrifying”.

A pride of feeling good. A pride of being a leader of the next Cursillo. So much pride, that the Lord cannot enter, there is no room for Jesus.

That is why all of us in the Ultreya, not just the leaders, must be convinced that we are not masters of anything, that the only protagonist is the Lord and that we are only poor instruments, often rusty, but always beloved and saved by Jesus.

7. It is definitely about having things clear. What do we intend when we think of someone for a Cursillo?
Are we looking to fill up the Cursillo?
Are we looking to have more people in the Ultreya?
Are we looking for the person to become a good husband or a good wife?

Are we looking to find a job for the person?

Have we lowered our aim, or do we even know what our aim is in the Cursillo?

Are we seeking to increase the hunger for God or are we inviting those who we believe are going to say yes to Cursillo?

Perhaps we have forgotten the ESSENCE AND PURPOSE OF CURSILLO.

The person who really discovers in a Cursillo that GOD LOVES him, then all personal goals change in his life. If he really discovers this, then this person leaves his prison and becomes a free person, a best friend, a better spouse, a better employee and finally a better PERSON.

What we have to communicate is the Joy of Faith, the Joy that comes when we believe and feel that God loves us.

10. In Conclusion

I wish to finish this Precursillo talk by reciting a poem that Eduardo used to recite when he was giving this rollo in a Cursillo de Cursillos.

This poem really summarizes the spirit of PRECURSILLO.

The name of the Poem is “The Sign” and the author is the Mexican poet Amado Nervo. Although this is Spanish poetry, I will try to translate it as well as possible in order for you to grasp its spirit and message.

“Don’t talk to everybody about the beautiful and essential things.

Do not cast daisies to the pigs.

Get down to your partner’s level to avoid humiliating or confusing them.

Be frivolous with the frivolous, but from time to time, almost as if unintentionally, drop the rose petal of fantasy in their cup, on top of the foam of their frivolity.

If they don’t notice the petal, pick it up and leave them alone, always smiling, that means that the right time for them has not come yet.

But, if someone picks up the petal, as if unnoticed, and he caresses it,

and he inhales its sweet aroma, then, right away, make him a small sign of recognition.

Then take him aside; show him one or several of the miraculous flowers of your garden;

Talk to him about the invisible Divinity that surrounds us... and give him the secret word, ‘the open Sesame’ of true Freedom!”