



The Role of the Spiritual Advisor in Cursillo¹

Presented by Deacon Andy Carrillo, Assistant National Spiritual Advisor, at the 29th National Cursillo Encounter held at the University of Scranton – July 20, 2019.

Introduction - Definitions

The title of the Rollo is “The Spiritual Advisor in the Cursillo Movement.” As I begin, it might be good to make a couple of clarifications. First, just to clarify the term used in the Cursillo Movement: The term is Spiritual Advisor and not Spiritual Director - a term that suggests that we are advising. Not directing.

“**Spiritual direction** is the practice of being with people as they attempt to deepen their relationship with the divine, or to learn and grow in their own personal **spirituality**. The director listens and asks questions to assist the ‘directee’ in his or her process of reflection and **spiritual** growth.” This can be a long-term process.

The Spiritual Advisor and His Role

The Spiritual Advisor’s Manual begins with the following concerning the Role of the Spiritual Advisor. It says:

- Make them loved, by loving.
- Make them respected, by respecting.
- They lead spiritually.
- They center doctrinally.
- They are not concerned with the “technique” of the Cursillo, which will always lessen the effectiveness in the “spiritual”.
- Practice their ministry.
- Give Spiritual Rollos and give Meditations.

The Spiritual Advisor’s main role is moral, doctrinal and spiritual. The lay people are responsible for the technique of the Cursillo. So, the laity do more of the technique (directing). The Spiritual advisor at the Diocesan Level is a link between the Cursillistas and the Bishop. To be an effective Spiritual Advisor, the priest, deacon or vowed religious must be familiar with the nature of the Cursillo; its founder, charism and the history of the Movement.

To this end, a Spiritual Advisors Workshop has been developed. At least three have been held – Fresno, CA, Phoenix, AZ and Kansas City, KS.

Cursillo Movement Spiritual Advisor Workshop

The Spiritual Advisor workshop is provided to assist Spiritual Advisors in understanding more fully the Cursillo Movement and their role as a Spiritual advisor and also as Cursillista. It is our continuing response to Saint Pope John Paul II’s invitation to Ecclesial Movements and New Communities to Study their founder and charism.

¹ Various Cursillo Resources – Spiritual Advisors Manual, Spiritual Advisors Workshop Guide, CDC Rollos

Eduardo Bonnín, our founder, was an avid reader, especially in the areas of theology and psychology. He wanted to understand the human person in their unique situation and environment and bring the Good News that “God in Christ loves me.”

The message of the Foundational Charism of the Cursillo Movement is simply that “God loves us.” The means is through friendship and the example of a life lived in grace made apparent to those within the person’s “one square meter”, which is their environment. If we as Cursillistas are true to our Charism, then we can understand fully and joyfully, the words of Eduardo:

“Life is beautiful and worth living because God in Christ love us”.

The workshop schedule works best if presented using the following format. It can be set prior to a Regional Encounter or as a standalone workshop. Usually the workshop is given by two clergy and two lay cursillistas. The Region is asked to cover team expenses.

Thursday

Registration and Brunch 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

1:00	1:30pm	Introduction
1:30	2:30pm	History of Cursillo
2:30	2:45pm	Break
2:45	3:45pm	Cursillo, the Popes and the Charism
3:45	4:00pm	Break
4:00	5:00pm	Mentality
5:00	5:15pm	Break
5:15	6:15pm	Essence and Purpose
6:15	6:30pm	Evening Prayer
6:30	7:30pm	Dinner
7:30	8:30pm	Three Phases of the Method
8:30	8:45pm	Night Prayer

Friday

7:30	8:00am	Mass
8:00	9:00am	Breakfast
9:00	10:00am	Sequence of the Spiritual Rollos and Meditations
10:00	10:15am	Break
10:15	11:15am	The Graces of the 7 Sacraments
11:15	11:30am	Break
11:30	12:30pm	Spiritual Advisor as a Cursillista
12:30	12:45pm	Conclusion and Final Q & A
12:45		Lunch and Departure

If a Diocese or Region is interested in a Spiritual Advisor workshop, please contact Cef Aguillon, National English Coordinator at cursillonec@gmail.com or Deacon Andy Carrillo, Assistant National Spiritual Advisor at acarri7688@aol.com.

The Spiritual Advisor – Precursillo

In addition to knowing and understanding the purpose of Precursillo, the Spiritual Advisor should:

- Be in constant communication with the Diocesan Secretariat.
- Help the Secretariat focus on prayer during the selection of candidates.
- Encourage prayer and Palanca for the Precursillo work.
- Communicate with other priests and deacons who are involved in the Movement.
- Pray for identifying and selecting team members for the weekend.
- Provide the spiritual element of team formation.
- Encourage education and formation for Sponsors.
- Offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Spiritual Direction for Cursillo leaders at a designated time before the Three Day Cursillo.
- Select and prepare and bring other priest, deacons and vow religious to the Cursillo Movement.
- Educate the clergy on the purpose of the Cursillo Movement.
- Ensure and witness life of grace of leaders.
- Make an effort to meet and become friends with the leaders.

The Spiritual Advisor on the Three Day Cursillo

The Three Day Cursillo, above all, is the living and sharing of what is fundamental to being Christian. The Three Day Cursillo is the discovery of the proposal, “come and see,” which the sponsor made to the candidate. It is the experience of a lived reality of the triple encounter with oneself, with Christ, and with others.

On the Three Day Cursillo there can be two types of Spiritual Advisors:

- Those who know Cursillo.
- Those who don't.

The first type suffers but one temptation and that is, to take over the role of the Rector. The second type suffers many temptations. Without knowledge of Cursillo, he can make arbitrary changes without knowing the ‘why’ of the Three Day Cursillo. Instead of bringing serenity he causes confusion. On the other hand, if the priest really knows the Cursillo Movement, the laity, sensing this, might hand over all responsibility to him if he is not careful. However, if the priest does not know Cursillo, he might still think he is an authority and always have to have the last word. In short, the wise and best Spiritual Advisor does only what he is supposed to do, because he is only the Spiritual Advisor. (The Cursillo, Yesterday and Today, page 60)

- To be available as much as possible (Grace stops in the least expected moments)
- Follow outlines of the meditations and rollos (It must follow the sequential development of the Three Days)
- The rollos are not theological treatises of encyclopedias
- Ensure there are enough confessors.
- Follow liturgical norms

During the Three Day Cursillo, the priest is responsible for:

- a. Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

There should be some provision for a time when the candidates wishing to do so can approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Weekend. It is the ideal for the priest

to be there for the three days. Candidates are not ready to go to confession at certain times but when they are moved by the Spirit.

b. Celebrating the Eucharist

The Eucharist is the “sacrament of piety, sign of unity, bond of charity, paschal banquet”, “source of the life of the Church, which makes her live and grow”; and the “source and summit of all Christian life.” The Eucharist is the center of life throughout the Three Days of the Cursillo.

c. Leading spiritually. (Structure of Ideas)

d. Centering doctrinally. (Structure of Ideas)

e. Giving the meditations. These are not rollos or acts of piety. (Structure of Ideas)

f. Establishing personal contact and friendship with the candidates.

g. Developing friendship with the team.

h. Giving the spiritual rollos. (Structure of Ideas) The spiritual rollos are a synthesis of the theology of Grace.

The Meditations and Rollos are placed in a sequential order for a reason. It is important that the Spiritual Advisor know and ensure that the Meditations and Rollos are presented in that order.

During this Rollo, we will talk about the *four phases of the Three Day Cursillo*.

The First Phase

The First Phase is the *Preparation – Retreat Phase*. We begin on Thursday with a spiritual retreat. This phase is to help the Cursillista awaken their moral conscience and help them encounter themselves where they are and a desire where God is and invite them to do a careful self-examination. The retreat sets a comfortable atmosphere where they can deal with something that is uncomfortable.

For it can be like when a small child falls and scrapes the knee, they get up and seem to be okay, but when their eyes meet mom, they scream. Because it is okay to be in pain when the one that understands me and loves me is there. And that is part of the first evening to help in whatever is causing them discomfort, to feel comfortable so they can open up.

One of the other things we invite them to do, is to enter into silence. As you all know in our culture silence is becoming more and more foreign. It may be because they have their smart phones, or they can look at anything any time or they can listen.

We try to tell them that the silence we will be practicing is an external silence but the more important silence is an interior silence. We can see and listen if they are being externally silent, but we cannot see if they are being internally silent. The more important silence we are trying to facilitate is the internal silence. Introduce the idea of meditation. The emptying of our minds so that God might fill it.

1st Meditation

The silence and the examination - How are you.

“Know yourself” Sincerity film, The Movie of your life.

What are you looking for; maybe what you will be looking for in the future.

2nd Meditation

The Loving Father
“The Prodigal Son”
God waits for you!
The Father forgives and loves - How Christ is.

3rd Meditation

“The Three Glances”
How God sees us - Peter, Rich Young Man and Judas.
Strong personal call – How Christ sees you.

The Second Phase

The second phase is the *Proclamation Phase*.

Habitual Grace – Call of a Christian – is the 2nd Rollo of the first day. Through this Rollo, we must open for the cursillistas a new world of unsuspected realities unknown to most of them and unheeded by all; analyzing clearly the effect of Habitual Grace. This Rollo should be assessable; clear in outline and sure in its judgment.

- Call to be divine – What is human become the bearer of what is divine
- Invitation into a new relationship – Come and see!
- Be holy, because I your God is Holy.
- Grace – the life of God, communicated freely to man and accepted freely by him through Grace

Actual Grace – Free choice of man to encounter God – the 4th Rollo of the first day. A spontaneous result that may come out of this Rollo should be the conviction of the Cursillistas that in the Cursillo they are constantly under the power of intense rain of actual graces of which they must take advantage; and everything that the Cursillo is meant to be for each one depends on this response. The Rollo should be incisive, practical and dynamic.

- Palanca – God showers us with grace through the prayers and sacrifices of others.
- Proclamation phase: How much God loves us. It ends with Piety!

The Third Phase

The third phase is the *call to Conversion*. It begins with the 4th Meditation; The Figure of Christ or the Person of Christ. The Christ who loves and also reconciles. How you should see Christ.

The second Rollo of the second day is Sacraments – encounters with Christ in his Church. The practical conclusion that the Cursillistas draws from this Rollo must be a clear, enthusiastic vision, deep in their soul, and moving of what Christ has done for us. This Rollo should be alive; enlivening; avoid excessive duration and melodramatic attitudes. Seventy-five minutes at the most.

The fourth Rollo of the second day is Obstacles to the Life in Grace – difficulties of Christian life. We must implant in the Cursillistas, without pessimism, the reality of the difficulties that they may encounter so they will recognize them and give practical means to overcome them. It should stress the gracefulness of the jump, rather than the importance of the obstacle.

The Fourth Phase

The fourth phase is *the Insertion*. Send them back to their environments. Nothing has changed but hopefully the Cursillista has changed. It begins with the fifth meditation – Christ’s message to the Cursillista – what does Christ expect of us? How Christ loves you.

Christ loves them and will go forth with them – bearer of fruit!

The second Rollo of the third day is Life in Grace. The tripod: Piety, Study – Action and commitment of love to God and men. The Rollo is intended to be a very clear presentation of the contents of the “Service Sheet” in reference to piety. Through it we bring out the meaning and “way of using it” of each of the practices in piety with suitable references to the Pilgrim’s Guide, in which are found an up-to-date and lively means of carrying them out. This Rollo should be convincing, practical, instructional.

The Spiritual Advisor – Postcursillo

Postcursillo is the reinsertion of those who experienced the Cursillo to their place of origin. The purpose of the Postcursillo is to see Christ in every moment. It is the effort made so that the candle (that Christ, through the Three Day Cursillo, placed in the center of the movable square meter in each of us) remain lit and illuminate others, especially those Faraway, in any one of the environments in which we live. The Postcursillo is the third phase in the Cursillo Movement, and the *key* to making the triple encounter discovered in the Three Day Cursillo, a continuous and progressive reality.

In addition to knowing and understanding the purpose of Postcursillo, the Spiritual Advisor makes contributions in the following areas:

a. In the Secretariat:

- Responsible for matters concerning doctrine and conscience.
- Foster unity through collaboration.
- Ensure that the service provided to Cursillistas is in line with the Gospel and charism of Cursillo.
- Maintain a link between the Movement and the local Bishop.
- Encourage and assist Cursillo leaders to pray and discern whether they are being called to serve as a member of the Secretariat.
- Encourage Cursillo leaders to be faithful and trustworthy stewards of the gift of Cursillo.
- Oversee the spiritual needs of the Secretariat and the Movement.

b. In the School of Leaders:

- Provide the doctrinal rollo. This section is provided by a priest, deacon or vowed religious. It contributes to the spiritual growth of the leaders through an explanation of the use of the means of deepening union with God. It helps the leaders develop the mind of Christ and the Church through explanation and application of the Documents of Vatican II; especially the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, On Evangelization in the Modern World, Vocation and Mission of the Laity to the Church and to the World, and of course, Scripture.

- Provide spiritual rollos to help the leadership live in a state of progressive conversion.
- Provide spiritual retreats for Cursillistas on an annual basis.
- Be vigilant of balancing the spiritual elements to complement the technical aspect of Cursillo.

c. **In the Ultreya:**

- The Spiritual Advisor summarizes all that was shared in the witness rollo and the echoes and puts it in proper perspective with the Gospel.
- Lead the closing prayer before the Blessed Sacrament (if available).

The Spiritual Advisor as a Cursillista

In the fourth century, St. Augustine offered this reflection upon being called to serve the Diocese of Hippo: *“What I am for you terrifies me; what I am with you consoles me. For you, I am a Bishop; but with you, I am a Christian. The former is a duty; the latter a grace. The former is a danger; the latter, salvation.”*

I would like to rephrase this for the Spiritual Advisor:

“What I am for you, terrifies me; what I am with you consoles me. For you, I am a Spiritual Advisor; but with you, I am a Cursillista. The former is a duty; the latter a grace. The former is a danger; the latter, salvation.”

If I am the Spiritual Advisor, then I must know and follow the method. If I am a Cursillista with you, then I must live the method.

Someone recently sent me this statement:

We are about being and not about doing!

De Colores!