



National Cursillo Movement

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Living Witness of the Foundational Charism

Presented by Hoang Tran, National Cursillo Service Administrator, at the 29th National Cursillo Encounter at the University of Scranton on July 19, 2019.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray: O God, who by the light of 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 consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

De Colores!

My dear Friends in Christ,

What a great joy seeing 900 friends from all over the country and especially two dear friends Miguel and Ramon from Mallorca gathering joyfully here in the love of God. About 50 Cursillistas, including Bishop Eduardo Nevares of Phoenix, were stranded at the airport in Chicago and Philadelphia due to bad weather but they were determined to get here by any means, Uber, rental cars, etc. In response, the volunteers for Registration, Hospitality and Transportation were willing to stay late to welcome one by one until 2 am this morning! What an act of friendship! Patrick told me a group of Cursillistas were driving 22 hours all the way up here from Dallas, TX to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Cursillo with us! Seeing all the volunteers putting their best efforts to make it such an inspiring event is really an eye-opening experience for me! You are all living witnesses of the Foundational Charism! So, I can conclude my rollo now because you have shown it all 😊.

Living witnesses of the Foundational Cursillo Charism! I like this topic because it has touched my core since I lived my Cursillo Weekend in 2007. But first, I'd like to learn from you how you define the Foundational Charism of Cursillo. We should understand what it is before we can live it, right?

Can you define the Charism of Cursillo with 1 word? LOVE!

Among all the charisms the primacy is Love. Love is the charism of all charisms, the most excellent and the one to which all others are subordinate. (Study of the Charism, page 20)

Here are some quotes from the "Foundational Charism" Rollo that our founder Eduardo Bonnín delivered at the V World Encounter in Seoul, Korea in 1997:

- Theology says that a charism is a gift that God gives to whomsoever He wants but is not meant for the person who gets it, but rather for the welfare of the whole Community and the Church.

A charism has certain elements as follows:

- A gift of God.
- To specific men or women
- For people and the Church
- Recognized by the Hierarchy

You can learn more details about these elements in the new book, “The Thinking of Eduardo Bonnín 1”. This book is the collection of Eduardo’s important rollos.

Other definitions of the Charism of Cursillo from the “Study of the Charism” book, page 40:

- The Charism of Cursillo is to feel the intimate experience that “God loves me”.
- The Charism of Cursillo is to have an apostolic hunger as being baptized, to communicate the great news of the Love of God to the most people in my environments, with a preference to those distant, so that all will feel that God loves them.
- The Charism of Cursillo is to live “De Colores” (filled with Grace), giving testimony in the moveable Square meter that surrounds us by the best means that is Friendship.

The emphasis is on the action verb “LIVE”. It's different from “participate” or “exercise”, etc. You can participate or exercise 2 or 3 hours a day and take a break, but you cannot live just 2 or 3 hours and then take a break because you will get a non-refundable and one-way ticket to your 5th Day right away! ☺

How to be a Living witness of the Foundational Charism or in other words, how to live the Charism of Cursillo in our daily life?

I'd like to share some secrets with you.

Recall the moment God called you by name at the Clausura!

Remember that moment? You were called by name!

It's the Apostolic commissioning! You were reminded that you are an apostle of Christ! Think about that for a moment! It was a sacred moment! You were sent forth to spread the best news that “God in Christ loves us” in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity, Blessed Mother Mary, Queen of the Apostles, and myriads of angels and saints! Indeed, that moment is much more magnificent than any commencement or presidential inauguration ceremony!

There are 3 very important dates I must remember in my life: my baptism date when I became the son of God, the date of my Clausura when I received the Apostolic commissioning from our Lord and became a lay apostle. Can you guess what the third one is? ... That would be my wife's birthday, or I will be in deep trouble!!! ☺

Living the Charism means living the Triple Encounter 24/7: rediscovering Self, Christ and Others.

The Encounter with Self at the Cursillo Weekend is just the beginning of the journey to the inner self. We must go deep and continue to explore the mystery of what we are and who we are - the wonder of being a PERSON - in the eyes of God. I'm so amazed to discern that our souls were

created so uniquely and beautifully in the hands of God and we are robed in royal attire as sons and daughters of God. We are princes and princesses! Unfortunately, I wasn't aware of such honor and privilege until I lived my Cursillo. I just let my soul get tainted with sins and at times it turned as dark as charcoal. God gave me an opportunity to watch the movie of my life through His eyes and I just wept for what I had done to Christ, for the thorns of sins I pierced through His Heart. But no matter how grave my sins were, His Heart is always open wide waiting for me to come back. At that moment, I totally surrendered to Christ! A deep conversion occurred, and a tsunami of Christ's Love just swept me away to a new land! The Three Encounters did happen at the same time. I realized who I am, who God is and who others are. The relationships with self, God, and others have transformed dramatically to the next level of being ONE, the one Mystical Body of Christ. Previously, I thought what I have done or what I have failed to do affect only certain people, but in fact it's affecting everyone in the Mystical Body of Christ!

Understanding that we belong to the Mystical Body of Christ, I realized that everything, that I thought I owned, belongs to God; my wealth, my degrees, my house, my cars etc. are all from God. Every heartbeat or every breath I take belongs to God. The only thing I own is my freedom to act or react, to choose God or choose evil.

I like the term "National Encounter" or "Regional Encounter" because it implies that something new and exciting is awaiting me. Do you know everyone in this room? Have you encountered the ones you haven't made friends with? So please don't sit with the friends you already know but mingle with the ones you don't know so that you can make new friends. That mindset will help you to reach out and make changes in your environments. People tend to stay in their comfort zones but following Christ is different; we need to step out of our comfort zones and reach out to others. We should ask ourselves this question: "how many new friends have I made during National Encounters, Regional Encounters, Cursillo de Cursillos, Ultreyas, retreats, workshops, conferences, etc.?"

We should have the conviction to reflect Christ, to actualize Christ in our moveable square meter. Our every thought, action or reaction, and what we say must aim at the sole purpose of spreading the Good News that God in Christ loves us! We must be a good virus, as effective as the Ebola virus. I refer to this good virus as "Kerygma"!

St. Padre Pio said:

"If the people of the world could only see the beauty of one's soul when it is in the grace of God, all sinners and unbelievers of this world would be instantly converted."

Called to live our lives fully with Christ one day at a time.

I love the Cursillo term "Fourth Day". It forces me to think hard and treasure every moment as if today is my last day. In his homily about the Eucharist at the 28th National Encounter in Seattle, Bishop Carlos Sevilla shared 3 thoughts he saw in the vesting room of the convent: **This is your first Mass. This is your last Mass. This is your only Mass!**

It's a practical reminder not only for the clergy but also for the laity, isn't it? We never know if we will live until tomorrow. We should live today fully as if it were our last day! Our actions or reactions or our priorities would change accordingly if we knew today was our last day, right?

However, if we live our lives with the “fourth day” mentality, we don’t have to change anything because we’re ready to encounter Christ face to face and plunge into His loving arms!

Communion in Cursillo

Communion is sharing, unity, common denominator, one body, intimate connection. Communion is “I in You and You in Me” . . . You and I are inseparable! You and I are so close to each other.

Cursillo is a living body, not an organization. And each one of us, no matter where we live or when we live, 4th day or 5th day, we are all connected through Christ. It’s a miracle and a mystery. You are my close friends in Christ! We can share and connect right away just like 2 drops of mercury!

If you asked me ‘what is the source of my perseverance, conviction, and joy of living my 4th Day’, I would answer without hesitation: The “Eucharist” - Emmanuel, the Word made flesh, the Christ who is alive, normal, and near us as our holy companion and our best friend! I always ask my Lord for this specific grace every time I go to daily Mass; “Lord, please don’t let me go to Mass as a robot or as a routine. Please grant me the chance to be in communion with the Trinity, all the Saints in heaven and all the souls in purgatory, especially those who asked for my prayers”. As Bishop Eduardo Nevares mentioned in his rollo, we actually have a foretaste of Heaven and a glimpse of Heaven during the Holy Mass! During the last couple of months, I really enjoyed seeing the way small children, 2- 5 years old, offering money at Mass. They didn’t walk, they ran toward the basket to put the money in and then ran back to their parents with a big smile and joy! They are so pure, simple and joyful and I did have a foretaste of Heaven with these little angels!

The Cursillo really creates the hunger for God in me. Going to daily Mass is still not enough. I desire to be with Him more, an intimate 1-on-1 with Jesus! Then I found 1 Perpetual Eucharistic adoration slot from 4am – 5am every Tuesday that needed to be filled at St. Helen Parish near my house. This 4am timeframe is the time we usually have deep sleep, right? It was a bit of challenge here, so I had to set an alarm to be on at 3:30 am on my phone and asked my wife to do the same on her phone just as a backup. But that night we couldn’t sleep because the feeling of encountering Christ 1-on-1 was so strong that we didn’t want to miss it at all. The experience of having a 1-on-1 with Jesus is so wonderful and intimate that my wife and I feel recharged and rejuvenated after visiting Him!

Believe it or not, you all are already in my prayers during my Blessed Sacrament Adoration even if you don’t ask for it. Your problems are my problems and vice versa. We must go deep in communion to understand how great love is, how precious our supernatural friendship is. You are my close friends even though I have met some of you for the 1st time. It’s a divine mystery!

Humility

Humility is the glue of unity! Humility will set us free from the desire of being praised or the fear of being criticized. Satan is very cunning. He’s working hard to block the big picture that we all belong to the same Body of Christ and we are in communion with each other. He will plant the seed of division, pride, anger etc. in each one of us if we don’t shield our hearts with humility

and love. Pride is a poisonous snake that we have caressed without realizing it. That snake is whispering in our ears every reason to justify our actions, that we did the right thing, that we did it for the sake of the Movement. However, deep down in our heart, we knew we did it for ourselves, for our pride, for our ego!

Maybe I am the one who hears most issues that we call ‘special concerns’ in Cursillo. Whether they are personal or Cursillo related matters, 99% of the root cause of the problems are ego related!

“Humility is the foundation of all the other virtues; therefore, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance.” (St. Augustine)

Perpetual Palanca

There’s one quote from the “Diary of Saint Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul” that struck me hard 9 months ago and I’ve been reflecting and meditating on this since then:

“If the angels were capable of envy, they would envy us for two things: one is the receiving of Holy Communion, and the other is suffering.”

Receiving Holy Communion is absolutely the priceless gift from Jesus and easy to understand. However, I had to think hard why suffering has such great value! Then by the grace of God, I found that if suffering is taken willingly with love in connection with the Passion of Christ, it turns out to be a very powerful Palanca for any intention and, indeed, those who can transform their sufferings into sacrificial offerings to God are powerful living witness to others! I have met Cursillistas who have been suffering from cancer or chronic illnesses or family disasters or anything we consider ‘bad luck’ but they never complain or rebel but remain calm, peaceful and even joyful!

I don’t know if anyone in this room ever experienced suffering? One way or the other, we all experience it; sudden loss of loved ones, illness, accidents, natural disasters, etc. Eduardo Bonnín suffered from Shingles during the last years of his life but he even celebrated the anniversary date when he got shingles! I bet he offered it as a powerful true Palanca for the Cursillo! So, what’s true Palanca? It’s our prayers and sacrifices wrapped in LOVE! We should take every opportunity to turn all our discomforts, issues or problems into sacrificial offerings to Love (God) and in Love! My flight was canceled . . . I turned it into Palanca. I got stuck in a traffic . . . I turned it into Palanca. Indeed, we are given so many opportunities every day to turn what we call ‘sufferings’ into real Palanca. Palanca is the key to unlock God’s graces to all of our petitions!

In Conclusion

My dear friends in Christ, I love Cursillo because it offers a simple and practical way to live fully the values of a Christian... being a disciple, being an apostle, and being a close friend with Jesus Christ and with all of you! It’s really a great joy serving you... it’s really a great joy living the Charism of Cursillo every day of my life! I used to be a successful executive in the corporate world and was granted about 100,000 shares and on paper I was a millionaire, but I was a ‘far away’ indeed and spiritually poor! Thanks to the Cursillo, I am now so blessed with 1 million shares of friendship granted by Jesus and I became a billionaire in grace and friendship instantly!

I won't exercise or sell any share because friendship is priceless! It's so close and dear to my heart! I will keep you all in my heart when I move on the next chapter of my life. I have really enjoy encountering each and every one of you, one Friend at a time with full attentiveness!

I'd like to end this Rollo with the quote from my uncle Eduardo Bonnín:

Life has meaning, because we have a "what" that drives us on and guides us. Life has value, because nothing can be found that has more value than a person. Life has flavor, because when the truth and the reality of Christ are at the center of the person, life is beautiful, people are important, and life is worth living!

De Colores!

Love never fails! (1 Cor 13:8)