



National Cursillo Movement

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The Regional Coordinator and Service Team

Presented by Ceferino (Cef) Aguillón, Jr., National English Coordinator, at the 30th National Cursillo Virtual Encounter on July 25, 2020.

Come, Holy Spirit!

De Colores, my name is Cef Aguillon. I lived my Cursillo in February 1986, and I currently serve as the National English Coordinator for the United States Cursillo Movement. I am pleased to be sharing this Virtual National Encounter with all of you. Thank you for your presence.

Introduction – A Calling from God

Let's begin with a brief reflection on God's calling. Have you ever asked yourself: *What more is God asking of me?* God, through Christ, is active in each of us in a personal way. Cursillo reminds us that the Christ of the Gospel, the Church, and Cursillo is alive, normal, and near to us. He is always at work in our lives, inviting, directing, guiding, proposing, and suggesting. We should never fear, doubt, or feel unworthy when God calls. God is working in our lives this very moment, and we are to respond right now.

The Gospels show us how Jesus called His first disciples. The Gospel according to Luke, speaks about the call of Simon the Fisherman. After Jesus had finished speaking to the crowd, He said to Simon "Put out into the deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "*Master we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.*" When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat for help. They came and filled both boats so that they were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "*Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.*" Jesus said to Simon, "*Do not be afraid; from now on, you will be catching men.*" Then they brought their boats to the shore, left everything and followed him. (Luke 5:4-8, 10)

God delights in calling people we'd least expect to do His work. He chose David, the youngest of Jesse's eight sons, a youth at the time, to be the future king of Israel. God chose a young Jewish woman and a carpenter from the small town of Nazareth to be the parents of His Son, Jesus. He chose ordinary fishermen to become His apostles and lead the Church. God looks beyond professional accomplishments and social status. God always looks into the hearts of His people. He is always looking for men and women who love him and are willing to be obedient to His call.

Through Baptism, we are called to participate in God's plan of salvation. God wants us to share the Good News of his love with all people. Our Cursillo experience is a confirmation of this call. In February 1986, I lived a Cursillo that would forever transform my life. It was the love of God and His Grace, the attentiveness of the leaders, their personal witnesses, and friendship that convinced me that God loves me unconditionally.

As I lived each day of the Cursillo, I knew, without a doubt, that God had led me to this Cursillo. It was during one of the breaks, sitting at the table of St. Paul, that I cried out loud: *“Lord use me as your instrument as you are using these brave men.”* I realized that God was calling me to a very special vocation: to love God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. And the rest is history!

Each of us has chosen a way of life: marriage, priesthood, religious life, single life, and it is within this state that we find our vocation. It is the Lord Himself who has called us. Yes, the Lord himself invites each of us to live our vocation. For Cursillistas, that call is to communicate the message that “God loves us” through friendship.

It is no accident that the Lord has called us. Each of us is part of God’s plan. Romans 8:28-30, tells us, *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified”.*

Therefore, there is a purpose and intention in our calling. Through the experience of the Cursillo, God calls us to a life centered on Jesus Christ. Through Cursillo, we became aware of our call for living what is fundamental to being Christian; not only *to do* Christian things, but *to be* Christian. The profound experience of my Cursillo, led me to where I am today; joined with my brothers and sisters in Christ, as servant leaders in the Cursillo Movement.

If you and I see where we are today as a response to a calling, we need to understand that no one fulfills their vocation overnight. Vocations evolve. Each of us needs to discern our call carefully.

The first thing we must do is recognize and accept the reality that it is, in fact, a call from the Lord, and as such, it should be respected. Cursillistas are called to give witness of Christ in their *moveable square meter* (environment) where God has placed them. Below is a quote from Eduardo that speaks about this.

“As for the recruitment of Cursillistas, especially those who recently lived their Cursillo, by certain parish priests, to incorporate them into diverse tasks or specific areas of the parish apostolate such as catechism, social justice, visiting the sick or other ministries; I consider that such requirements, will not constitute an advance of being Christian for the Cursillista. Especially, when the administration of such new ecclesial responsibilities takes time away from his basic Christian action in daily life, which is to give witness of Christ in the place where God has placed him.” (Eduardo Bonnin, The Contribution of Cursillos in the Renewal of the Parish)

The founder is not saying Cursillistas cannot serve in parish ministries. They have the freedom to do so. He is simply clarifying that clergy and Cursillo leaders should not impose on Cursillistas’ freedom by incorporating them into parish ministries or their favorite apostolates immediately after a Cursillo. The intention may be good, but this is not the genuine purpose of Cursillo.

The apostolate cannot have the same response as we might have for our hobbies, entertainment or leisure: “when I want,” “when I have time” or “because I like it.” The vocation to serve in the Cursillo Movement is an investment of time, talent and, yes, sometimes our treasure, because the One who is inviting us, is God.

The Regional Coordinator and Service Team

God continues to call Cursillistas to serve at the diocesan, regional, national, and even the world level. His vineyard has room for all Cursillistas!

Let us review the functions or purpose of a Regional Coordinator and Service Team.

Let’s talk about how the Regional Coordinator and Service Team for your Region got to where they are today? These Cursillo leaders responded to the call because they wanted to share their love of God with others, they wanted to value and be attentive to the person, and they wanted to make their friends, friends of Christ. They understand that all this is possible by simply living and applying the specific purpose and method of Cursillo. *To live Cursillo is to live the Gospel!*

Currently, we have 26 Regional Coordinators serving the US Cursillo Movement. They are members of the National Secretariat. God called each coordinator to assist the Diocesan Cursillo Movements in their respective regions. The US Cursillo Movement has 12 regions made up of 7 language groups: English, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Qualities and Criteria of a Regional Coordinator and Service Team Members

Purpose – These leaders understand that Cursillo is about communicating God’s love to as many people as possible, preferentially, but not exclusively, to the “far away” [distant ones] through the charism of friendship with self, Christ, and others.

Charism – These leaders live and promote the Foundational Charism of Cursillo through example.

Teamwork – These are Cursillo leaders who work with the Regional Secretariat [Lay Directors] and Service Team to meet the needs of the Diocesan Movements in the Region.

Service – They provide workshops to keep Cursillistas informed about the life of our founder and those who supported him, and the charism and history of Cursillo.

Perseverance – These Cursillo leaders live and promote the method of perseverance: Group Reunion and Ultreya. They understand that these are means, not an end.

Friendship – They understand that friendship is foundational in Cursillo; therefore, they promote it in their moveable square meter at the diocesan, regional, and national levels.

Messengers – Constant communication between the Regional Coordinator, Service Team, and Regional Secretariat is essential to keep everyone informed of what is happening in the Movement, at the diocesan, regional, and national levels.

Piety – Their acts of piety facilitate an open and personal friendship with Christ. Piety facilitates *conviction*.

Study – These leaders are active participants of a School of Leaders, where together with other Cursillistas, they reflect on the writings of our founder, the mentality, essence, purpose, and method of Cursillo. Through their study, they grow in knowledge of themselves, of Christ, and others to grow in friendship with all three. Study facilitates *decisiveness* to make the right decisions at the right time.

Action – These leaders do not impose, they propose. Their apostolic action is transformed into serving others, and they do so through their conviction, decisiveness, and perseverance (constancy). Their activity is the perfection of their piety; dedicating their very lives to God by aligning their will to His will, and then doing what they have been asked to do. Apostolic action facilitates *perseverance* through love.

Witness – These leaders give witness to the best news that God through Christ loves us, and they communicate that love to the person through the best means, which is friendship.

Generosity – These leaders are willing to give of their time, talents, and treasure, and even their lives if necessary.

Determination – These leaders are not looking to stand *out*, but to stand *firm* on the Gospel and the Charism of Cursillo.

Affirmation – These leaders have the support of their Diocesan and Regional Secretariat, and they are Catholics in good standing with the Church and the Movement.

Development – They work together with the Regional Secretariat to promote leadership, development and ensure that a Regional Service Team Member Pool of qualified leaders is in place to fill future vacancies on the Service Team.

Authenticity – They ensure that a Regional Apostolic Plan is in place to guide the Regional Diocesan Movements in meeting their needs in all three phases according to the charism of Cursillo.

Trustworthy – These leaders represent the National Cursillo Movement in their moveable square meter; therefore, they support and promote all authentic aspects of the Movement.

I have personally served with many Regional Coordinators and Service Team members, and I've witnessed these qualities in them. Serving as a Regional Coordinator and Service Team member requires traveling to the different dioceses for meetings, workshops, encounters, Cursillo de Cursillos, etc. They are willing to dedicate their time and talents to serve others. In some cases, they have to take time from work for travel, but that doesn't stop them!

Over the years I've had the opportunity to travel with some Regional Coordinators, sometimes two weeks at a time, to visit the Diocesan Secretariats and Schools of Leaders in their respective

regions. These coordinators were excited to meet with Cursillistas in-person, to share Cursillo and their faith with them. These interactions were always an enjoyable experience for them, and their only regret was that their 3-year term was ending soon.

Regional Coordinator Selection Process

The current Regional Service Team members, the Regional Spiritual Advisor, and the Regional Secretariat [Diocesan Lay Directors] select one of the Regional Service Team members to serve as Regional Coordinator for their language group. This Cursillista needs to have the support of the Diocesan and Regional Secretariat and the approval of the National Secretariat.

Those eligible to be selected to serve as Regional Coordinator are current members of the Regional Service Team. They have served at least one year in their present term on the Regional Service Team and agree to serve as a Regional Coordinator for three years. Once selected, the Regional Coordinator serves as a member of the National Secretariat for *three* years.

The Regional Coordinator strives to meet the needs of the Diocesan Movements, identified by the Regional Secretariat. Together with the Service Team, they provide workshops and encounters to keep Cursillo leaders informed and focused on the Foundational Charism of Cursillo and its intended purpose: to communicate God's love (to evangelize) to the person.

The Regional Coordinator is the voice of the Cursillistas in the Region, especially during National Secretariat meetings. The coordinator is a friend who promotes friendship. The coordinator is a leader who strives for a unity of purpose and understanding of the Cursillo mentality, essence, purpose, and method in light of its charism.

Serving as Regional Coordinator and member of the National Secretariat is a rewarding experience and an opportunity to serve. I was selected Regional Coordinator in the early '90s, shortly after serving as Lay Director of the diocese. As Region 8 Coordinator, the Service Team and I served the dioceses in the states of Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and Louisiana. God called, and I responded! I knew Cursillo was my vocation ever since I lived my Cursillo in February 1986.

Sometimes I used all my vacation time to travel to different dioceses and regions to provide workshops and regional encounters. I have always enjoyed sharing my faith and Cursillo with my Cursillista brothers and sisters. I have had the pleasure of participating in monthly conversations with the Regional Coordinators to get to know each other better, to become friends, and to go deeper into the Foundational Charism of Cursillo. I've seen many Regional Coordinators come and go, and most all of them have shared the same impression; *I wish I had more time to serve in this capacity.*

Regional Service Team Member Selection Process

The Regional Service Team are Cursillo leaders who, through prayer and discernment, have responded to God's call to serve Christ and His Church through the gift of Cursillo.

Each Regional Coordinator has a Service Team, selected by the Regional Secretariat (Lay Directors) from among members of the Regional Service Team Pool. The Service Team consists of 3 to 5 members. All Regional Coordinators are transitioning towards the maximum number of

Service Team members, which is *five*. There are several vacancies on some Service Teams which the Lay Directors (Regional Secretariat) are actively working to fill. The term for a Regional Service Team member is *four* years.

The Service Team assists in meeting the needs of dioceses in the Region by providing workshops, meetings, and Cursillo De Cursillos. The Regional Coordinator and Service Team share the same qualities and criteria. Their respective Lay Director and Regional Secretariat agree that these leaders have the necessary experience to be a member of the Service Team. The Lay Director is responsible for providing the Service Team Member Orientation to those leaders interested in serving on the Regional Service Team. Since these leaders are being selected from a Regional Service Team Pool of qualified leaders, any of the Service Team members, with at least one year of service, could be selected to serve as Regional Coordinator and member of the National Secretariat.

In Closing

My brothers and sisters, it is no accident that we are where we are today, leaders for Christ and the Movement. We know this because we see it as God's plan for us. Jesus tells us, *"I have called you friends."* *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you."* (John 15:15-16)

Don't be surprised if God calls you to do something for Him that you don't feel equipped to do. Maybe He is calling you to serve as a Service Team member, member of the Diocesan Secretariat, or to work in the kitchen at the next Cursillo or simply to pray and offer Palanca for the Movement.

Your first thought might be about what you are lacking. But God sees what you already have: *a willingness to serve Him*. Be assured that He won't leave you on your own. God will give you the wisdom you need, He will lead you to the resources you are looking for, and He will send you people to help you. He will even supply you with courage and confidence. Therefore, be alert to the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit. He is counting on you!

Thank you for your service, leadership, and friendship and for your willingness to answer the call to serve Christ and His Church through the gift of Cursillos in Christianity.

De Colores & God Bless You!

Ceferino (Cef) Aguillon, Jr.
National English Coordinator
The Cursillos in Christianity Movement