

CURSILLOS[®]

in CHRISTIANITY

National Newsletter

EDUARDO BONNÍN AGUILÓ

100 YEARS

BIOGRAPHY AND MENTALITY - PART 16



Servant of God
Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló
· Founder of
Cursillos in Christianity
1917 – 2008

DECEMBER 2022

[Welcome](#)

[What is Cursillo](#)

[My Resource Center](#)

[Cursillo Literature](#)

[National Newsletter](#)

[Palanca Requests](#)

[Donate to Cursillo](#)

[Forms & Memo](#)

[Links & Contacts](#)

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WHAT IS IT THAT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO BEING CHRISTIAN?

What is it that is fundamental to being Christian? Christianity is not a doctrine to be known but a reality that must be lived. To embody what it means to be Christian in daily life Christianity must be lived in connection with life itself, flowing from what life is, and internalizing the realities that lead to the summit of what it means to be Christian. What is fundamental to Christianity is not just trying to understand and assimilate the Gospel as an easy option for virtue but to strive with honesty to always exercise the virtue of opting for Christ and for the person.

God in Christ loves us. God loves me.

To be a Christian, more than anything, is to feel loved by God and to live in astonishment of that love. Allowing oneself to be loved by God is what is most genuinely Christian.

The internal attitude that this reality generates, when it is truly believed and lived to its fullness, ferments and infects. But to understand it, to experience it, to find the God who is love - as He is - it is necessary to present ourselves to Him as we are.

God loves me. It is the accurate truth and the greatest good.

It is the only value that values everything... and never loses its value because it gives value to everything that is of real value in a currency that never changes.

It is the most vivid, most real, and dynamic reality.

It is the connection, direction, and rhythm of the most effective, most personal, and fullest reality in life.

When this reality is understood, lived, and shared by a person, it becomes resoundingly clear with the strength to provoke a vitality that energizes everything.

It impels people, events, and things, towards their most radical originality, towards their most abundant fullness, and towards their most dynamic creativity.

This lets us see everything from God's perspective, and therefore in an optimistic, cheerful, and confident way. It is a new way of seeing ordinary things.

The Cursillo focuses on what is Christian from this reality.

The part of the solution a person can offer must begin with oneself, starting from within, and starting right now.

To those who have ears to hear they are asked to have a consistent attitude, with possibility, immediacy, and concreteness, that can be achieved right now, by oneself and . . . more than anything, what you are trying to achieve is to know how to adopt a positive attitude towards life.

The message, the spirit of Cursillo, should not be just a reality that was realized in history but rather it should become an axis that we give to our personal history and therefore to all of history.

It is not a change in the system; it is a change of system.

It is about discovering another vision, undoubtedly deeper and more authentic.

With utmost respect, it is something like what the Lord says in the Gospel: "It has been said that . . ., but I tell you . . ."

To understand it, one must move from the concept of the "commandment" to love God to the Good and perennial News that God loves us.

It should also be noted that since we were children, we have been told that we must believe, love, and hope in God almost always without first communicating to us the Great News that God in Christ believes in us, loves us, and even is waiting with hope that we respond to Him.

Since we were little, we have been told that if we do something wrong God is watching us, and the idea we have had is that of a policing God who is spying on us, but the reality is very different. The Lord, more than watching us, He looks at us, and looks at us with interest, with enthusiasm, with love, as a father looks at his son or as a grandfather or grandmother looks at their grandchildren. There exists between Him and the person a privileged and all-embracing relationship.

When these realities are understood and developed and lived in the life of each person with enthusiasm, resolve, and heart, they become an orbit and channel of the highest level of personal fulfillment and satisfy the inescapable necessity that everyone has for successful social interaction.

He who has lived the experience of a Cursillo and has understood it, usually does not fail to take advantage of the precise and concrete means that are given to him – the Group Reunion and Ultreya – which when practiced as required by their purpose, and for what they have and contain of spirit and truth, serve not only to preserve the spirit and the encouragement they have discovered, rediscovered, and experienced in the three days of the Cursillo, but to energize it, activate it, and expand upon it from their “being” and their “being a person in action” in the concrete circumstances where God has placed them. This is something obviously more difficult than wanting to simply play roles of “committed Christians” who are almost always “committing Christians”, obstinate salesmen of prayers, meetings, and pious works – who since they are not energized by faith, conviction, enthusiasm, and the pressure to evangelize which every Christian must have and express in order to be Christian – they lose sight of the target that was once proposed to them and soon find themselves experiencing what someone correctly called “the weariness of the good.”

To try to ensure that the enthusiasm of the Cursillo does not get abandoned in the boring sandbanks of the pious for a period of time, losing or squandering human talents, the Postcursillo aims above all else that each person tries to be himself, discovering himself and leading the way through the path of his life, while thanking God for his talents and knowing how to offer his limitations which are always on the cutting edge of the crucifying circumstances that each person has to endure.

The internalization through the conscious grace that he lives, wants to live, or is pained not to live, deepened through personal reflection and lively, friendly, regular contact with his brothers or sisters, brings him to perceive the alive, normal, and near Christ whom every Christian is called to make transparent in their life within his own person, which makes him more of a person.

Within normal life, when someone can experience in themselves or in those who live near them, that Christ lives, that He is alive, that He can enliven everything, and that with HIM by a person’s side – life is beautiful, people are important, and life is worth living – they also learn to see Christ in other people, whether or not they are Christians.

Through living and sharing with their brothers and sisters the truths they came to know in Cursillo and applied in their life, it is understood that what is Christian is the leaven of the gospel that when placed and brought alive in the interior of a person, it shapes and builds one’s

conviction, and as it reaches the most personal areas of each human, it awakens them to be able to make decisions more conscientiously.

It pains us that the world is the way it is, and we would like it to be as Christ wants. Our task - we know it well - is not in savoring and enjoying what has been discovered but in making it possible for many more. We also know that convinced and determined people are the only ones who can convince and decide, and even excite others.

We cannot forget that the Cursillo Movement was not thought of for the best comfort of those who call themselves “good” and who may think they are, but to see that those who call themselves “bad,” and who almost never are to the extent people believe. The uninformed, the inadequately informed, and the misinformed, can be reached in a simple, concrete, and attractive way with the Great News that God, in Christ, is alive and loves you.

To be Christian is not to accept Jesus’ teachings, it is not to simply accept His moral norms, His style of life, it is not only to celebrate the worship He instituted; to be Christian is to believe He lives and is among those who, as brothers and sisters, gather in His name.” 





Father David Smith Passed to His Fifth Day

On October 8, our beloved priest, Fr. David Smith, passed on to his 5th day, only 7 days before his 72nd birthday. He was a fervent supporter of the Cursillos in Christianity. His life and work have much to teach us about the evolution of people in their secular and ecclesiastical lives, about the relationship between God and the person, about our behavior according to our proper place in our environments and within the Cursillos in Christianity movement. The triangle “Christ, Person, and Friendship” had embodied him. He was an avid reader, self-taught, avid writer, aviation enthusiast, and an “incredible” companion to the sick and the dying.

Fr. David Smith was born at Jackson Memorial Hospital on October 15, 1950. He was born with kidney cancer. *“They thought he wasn’t going to make it. Then the doctors said it was a miracle. Everything cleared up,”* comments his brother Stephen. Also, *Hurricane King would hit a few days later, and the windows blew out in the hospital room where his mother was.*

Fr. Smith grew up in Miami Springs, but felt more at home in neighboring Hialeah. He was fluent in Spanish, a language he learned himself. He read newspapers and watched television programs in Spanish. He was so fluent that he tended to think in Spanish, says Maria León, who had met him in the Cursillos in Christianity movement, after (after many years) she had already met him when she was 18 and he was working in a bowling alley. He also learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and could “get by” in Portuguese and Italian, says his brother.

Before entering the seminary, he “went out into the real world,” his brother said. “He worked as a bookkeeper at several bowling alleys and as a loader for Span East Airlines. Later, Fr. David worked his way up to assistant supervisor of cargo. He also did stints as a health care orderly and warehouse supervisor.

Fr. Smith would say that he discovered his vocation after living his Cursillo around 1976. His involvement continued throughout his priesthood. Of his 40 years of priesthood, he spent 20 caring for the sick in hospitals and hospices. “He had such a devotion to the sick that it was unbelievable. He would spend hours with them, talking to them, praying, telling them about God. Any time they called him, he would go to anoint them. He would never say no...one time he flew out to anoint a former parishioner who lived in another state, and he came back in time to celebrate Mass at the parish the next morning.”

He served in many capacities within the Cursillo Movement: Miami Cursillo Movement Spiritual Advisor in English. Region 7 Spiritual Advisor, National Spiritual Advisor, OMCC Spiritual Advisor (World Organization of Cursillos in Christianity).

As for the Cursillo Movement, Fr. David, succeeded in making his mission a living reality as a member of the clergy in relation to the charisms of the Church. He knew how to fulfill his responsibility to know, discern, support, and protect the charisms raised by the Holy Spirit.

An example of this is evident from his own words, in his rollo **“Role Of The Spiritual Advisor In Cursillo”** during the 23rd National Cursillo Encounter in 2013 in New York - July 27, 2013.

When analyzing the definition in which Eduardo Bonnín refers to the Cursillo Movement as a movement, in Bonnín’s words,

“... attempts from the church, that the realities of is Christian become life in the singularity, originality, and creativity of each person...”

Fr. David remarks:

“from the church” - not “OF THE CHURCH”, the church discerns and approves the charism, but it does not “own” it.

Fr. David sought to learn more about the movement he had embraced, and his knowledge and conviction evolved as he studied the material available and participated in various activities of the movement.

His own words describe that evolution:

“When I did not know about or endorse the Fundamental Charism, as the then National Spiritual Advisor, I was invited to participate in the II Conversations of Cala Figuera in Mallorca. A group of priests and lay people (12 people) went to visit Eduardo Bonnín in his apartment in April 2002. I left discouraged when Eduardo began our meeting like this: “The priests have kidnapped the movement”. Six months after having read “Historias y Memorias de los Cursillos” [Cursillo History & Memory] (Francisco Forteza) and “Volviendo a las Fuentes” [Returning to the Founts] (several articles by different authors in a volume published by Alberto Monteagudo), I agreed with that shocking statement of Eduardo.”

From the Catholic.net website we gathered these words of Fr. David Smith:

“I was one of the major propagandists for Fundamental Ideas #2 in the United States. I was commissioned in 1999 to rewrite the U.S. [Spiritual] Advisors Manual. I finished the draft and sent it to National in Dallas. But, in April 2002 I participated in the 2nd Conversations of Cala Figuera and had my first audience with Eduardo Bonnín. Upon returning to Miami, I spent 6 months of inner struggle. Two distinct movements? I opted for the Foundational Charism and contacted the U.S. National Office, asking them to destroy the text of the [Spiritual] Advisors Manual.”

“...we need to establish as a priority for Cursillo to return to our roots, emphasizing to get closer to the youth and the “far away” Eduardo, lamenting the situation of the “far away” said; ‘No one should live without knowing that God loves them’. The ‘far away’ and the youth were the reasons why the Cursillo was conceived, prayed, and structured.”

Omar Palacios - LA Cursillo



Region III's Succession Planning

The Cursillistas in the photo give witness to Region III's leadership, mentorship, and succession planning. The Region III Encounter Spiritual Advisors commissioned the new Regional Coordinator, Dan Kubisiak, with past Regional Coordinators present as a sign of support and solidarity. These Cursillistas represent a total of 25 years of experience, service, and friendship.

Seated left to right: *Pat Tower Reinbold 2013-2016, Carol Palesh 2000-2003, Mary Kay Fleckenstein 2010-2013.*

Standing left to right: *Bobbi LaVoie 2019-2022, Barb Bundy 2016-2019, Fr. Mickey McGrath, Dan Kubisiak 2022-2025, Wayne Fleckenstein 2006-2010, Gail Terrana 1997-2000, Deacon Gary Terrana.*

What is *succession planning*? "Succession planning is a process for identifying and developing new leaders who can replace veteran leaders when they leave or retire." It entails first identifying, then developing internal people with the potential to fill key positions, thus increasing the availability of experienced and capable people that are prepared to assume these roles as they become available. (Excerpt from *Succession Planning* by Cecelia Hamilton, Owensboro Diocese, August 2018)

The five steps for "Succession Planning" include:

1. Identify those with potential or willingness.
2. Identify the gaps.
3. Develop the person's knowledge.
4. Engage the person in leadership; and
5. Improve the person's commitment.

To read *Succession Planning* in its entirety, visit the link below:

<https://www.natl-cursillo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Succession-Planning.pdf>

