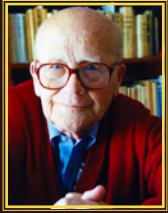


CURSILLOS

in CHRISTIANITY

National Newsletter



Servant of God

Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló

Founder of
Cursillos in Christianity
1917 – 2008

October 2023

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Signs of HOPE

An Interview with Eduardo Bonnín conducted by Bishop Paul Josef Cordes, Part 3

In early 1997, Eduardo Bonnín received a visit from Bishop Paul Josef Cordes of the Vatican (Cardinal and President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum”). Bishop Cordes was called to interview seven founders from prominent ecclesial Movements in preparation for the First World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, which would be held in 1998 in Rome.

8. Bishop Cordes: God has always fermented different Charisms in the Church.

Eduardo Bonnín: It has always been evident to me that God has never abandoned His Church. In His infinite providence, He makes sure that all through history, the love He has for men will always manifest itself one way or the other.

The ways He utilizes to touch man’s conscience and open it to the unbelievable, but possible, friendship with Him is always different and varies, depending on the person.

Sometimes, to obtain a man’s attention and will, God will use another person, an event, or an idea, a community, an institution, a behavior, etc.

9. Bishop Cordes: What is a Charism for you?

Eduardo Bonnín: I firmly believe in what the theology affirms. We can verify that a charism is a gift of God given to the one He chooses. It is given not for the one who receives it, but for the community so that the community and the Church will benefit.

10. Bishop Cordes: A Charism realizes itself in the heart of the Church.

Eduardo Bonnín: To feel Christian and not to feel self as a member of a Church seems to me to be a contradiction. When this happens, I tell myself that it signifies an ignorance of what it is to be a Christian or what the Church is. It is a very common contradiction. The message of Christ reaches men uniquely and exclusively through rigid and demanding moral precepts that are separated from the source of their truth. It appears absurd to them, and the notion of the Church reaches them in a manner so diminished and false that, for many, the Church is formed solely by a few men who are light years away from the reality of life, and who use a language that makes communication very difficult and makes dialogue impossible.

11. Bishop Cordes: What has been and is your relation to the ecclesial structure? And with the Pope, responsible by his function for the discernment of charisms?

Eduardo Bonnín: In my humble opinion, it is the responsibility of the ecclesial structure to discern, to encourage, but not to choke initiatives or ideas.

In this respect, I was very happy to read: “The judgment of the authenticity of a charism and its reasonable exercise, is the responsibility of those who have the authority in the Church; it is their duty, above all, not to choke the Spirit, but to examine all and to retain all that is good.”

The Cursillo Movement is a movement in the Church, but not for the Church, but rather for the world, meaning for everybody in the world, in the same way that the Church herself is. As part of the Church, it needs priests and lay people, who, in addition to a constant dialogue, must be faithful to and not distance themselves from the Foundational Charism. Unfortunately, importance has always been given to alienating things, mainly on the juridical level, and to the ideas of those who give the impression, that they are searching more to glorify themselves than to studying seriously, and in-depth, the “WHY” of Cursillo and “TO WHOM” it is directed.

I believe it is clear, that at all times, I wanted to be a son of the Church. I notice that history repeats itself many times: when someone has an idea different from the oldest of ideas, there are always people who rise, using all their energy, to persecute and discredit it. I find it very good that the hierarchy should do the discernment. In my opinion, new ideas can be passing sparks or flames, capable of lighting up the horizon. Sometimes, the innovators – and I have myself experienced this affirmation – adopt an attitude like the one adopted by Jesus' disciples when people did not want to receive Him in Samaria: "Lord, may the fire of heaven be upon them!" I have often thought that the Lord must have rejoiced at the strength and vehemence with which His disciples were making their request. This never distracted Him from maintaining His own serene attitude, and consequently, the fire of heaven never struck.

I believe that all initiatives and preoccupations that surface in some way everywhere have, without doubt, a need for discernment by the hierarchy, to calm the spirit and ease their ardor, accomplished by them studying what merits exist, according to their discernment. But I am asking myself why reaching it has to be so complicated.

Concerning "Cursillo," that dialogue has never been possible, nor has listening to the Founders. I must confess that I am not speaking the truth when using the plural, but to singularize myself leaves me uneasy. It is possible that this is all my fault because I chose the easy solution by being silent on the truths I lived, not by a choice of facility, but by experiencing in my own flesh, an infinite number of times, that to obey was more important than the truth and my interest was that the "Cursillo" should flourish in spite of everything.

12. Bishop Cordes: Can you tell us how your charism is lived in concrete terms, and how the persons living in your movement are expressing it in their lives?

Eduardo Bonnín: I must say, before anything else, that the "your" in the question puts me ill at ease. I believe that what the movement has achieved and all it has tried to accomplish in the world, has become a reality because its author is the Holy Spirit.

According to my understanding, the charism has been confirmed with time, because of the manner in which people, possessing the right disposition necessary for the three days of the Cursillo, and who grasped the simplicity of the message, have welcomed it into their lives, by trying to live it daily, fixing and affirming what they have learned in the Cursillo, namely the Group Reunion, for the personal dimension, and the Ultreya for the social dimension.

In both cases, it is by carefully cultivating the dynamism of conversion, through the unifying force of friendship, which not only brings people together and creates a bond but it makes them feel voluntarily united in the daily and human life of a small group, which creates and maintains, in the small things, a heartfelt closeness, where each one can express himself as he is, in front of the others.

The lively and attractive bond in these groups is facilitated by the personal disposition of each one in pursuing, in their own life, the three things asked on the first day of the Cursillo: his spirit of hopeful enthusiasm, the gift of himself, and love.

This disposition is lived in an atmosphere of great brotherhood that engenders a special type of relationship, with its own language and its own style of sincere and natural joy. It is a distinct and different spirit from what the so-called "pious people" are used to living.

The conclusion drawn by those who have lived the experience of Cursillo is the evidence that God loves everyone in Jesus Christ.

Each person knows that to be Christian is first to feel loved by God and to live in wonder of it, since what is most authentically Christian is to let God love us. When believed and lived fully, the interior attitude created by this reality becomes a leaven and is transmitted to others. But, to grasp this, experience it, and encounter God who is love, we must present ourselves to Him as we truly are.



THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS

*"For he will command his angels concerning you,
to guard you in all his ways."*

~ Psalm 91:11

The Sacramento Diocese English Cursillo Community Apostolic Planning and Benefits of a Cursillo de Cursillos

Background Information: The Catholic Church, in its post-pandemic reality, has to find ways to have the faithful return to the pews and celebrate the Sunday Liturgy shoulder-to-shoulder with their own faith community. In the same way, the Cursillo Movement has to find effective ways to gather once again in person and share the beauty of our charism. The doors of the Catholic Church were closed for 15 months, resorting to online technology to reach the faithful. In the same way, our Ultreya gathering turned into a Zoom event.

Apostolic Planning: At the start of the new Secretariat's 3-year term in January 2023, the Most Reverend Jaime Soto presided over the Rite of Commissioning of its 8 members. These members accepted the responsibilities entrusted to them by their bishop and the community as servant leaders. They pledged to remain faithful stewards of the Catholic Church and the charism of the Cursillo Movement. At this juncture, they realized it was time for an in-person gathering of all Cursillistas - to *guide those they serve to a loving friendship with Christ through a living witness, prayer, and sacrifice.*

The newly commissioned Secretariat held their first meeting with a vision of inviting the "far away Cursillistas" in our diocese. The Sacramento Diocese comprises 20 counties covering 42,597 square miles of the north and eastern regions of California. It was in the first official Secretariat meeting that the (1st Year) Apostolic Plan was introduced.

The vision was to energize the Movement with key activities that would promote fellowship amongst FRIENDS, rebuilding the cornerstone of our Movement, FRIENDSHIP, and COMMUNITY. The Apostolic Plan was designed to itemize quarterly objectives to achieve the goal of gathering...for in these gatherings we encounter the God of all good things through His Son, Jesus Christ.

We created committees to handle key tasks in reinvigorating the Movement. Committees were identified for the planning and execution of the following activities: (1) Review and revise the 2003 Articles and ByLaws; (2) A Day of Recollection with Secretariat and Parish Representatives gathering in prayer. (3) A Fund Development group to raise money for a Cursillo de Cursillos (CDC) workshop and all other needs; (4) A CDC Logistical Planning Team from National, Regional, and Host Team; and (5) Grand Ultreya with the Filipino, Vietnamese, Spanish and English Cursillo Communities in the Sacramento Diocese.

Punctuated in between all these activities are the Secretariat's primary roles and responsibilities in performing its 3 facets of Cursillo methodologies. The Precursillo, Three-Day Cursillo, and Postcursillo are now in place for this year. Discernment for the next Rector/Rectora was completed at the beginning of the year, the Precursillo work promoting Men's and Women's Cursillo Weekends continues, and the weekends are now scheduled for Fall. What's left to do is for Weekend Team Members to evaluate what worked and what didn't work for better future planning.

Upon review of our first-year Cursillo Apostolic Plan for the first 3 quarters of 2023, we've met all our goals: (1) The Secretariat ratified its Amended Articles and Bylaws in its July Secretariat meeting; (2) A Day of Recollection with the theme "Enkindled with



Front: Cef Aguillon, *National Cursillo English Coordinator*; Most Rev. Jaime Soto, Bishop of Sacramento and Penny De Leon, *Region 11 Filipino Coordinator*.

Back: Fr. Mark Seiker, *National Cursillo Spiritual Advisor*, Heidi Shelton, *Region 11 Service Team*; Verne Bowers, *Sacramento Cursillo Coordinator*; Len Robrigado, *Region 11 Filipino Service Team*; and Beth Schroeder, *Region 6 Cursillo Coordinator*.

the Fire of God's Love," was held last spring with 40 key leaders participating; (3) An "Energize Luncheon" fundraising event was held with 200 Cursillistas participating through attendance, volunteerism and auction item donations; (4) a CDC was held on August 31-September 3. Six members from National and Regional staff facilitated the CDC Weekend with 35 Cursillistas; and (5) The Grand Ultreya is now scheduled for the Spring of 2024, a show of unity in diversity.

Cursillos de Cursillos: We've achieved all our initial goals to jumpstart the Movement in Sacramento, but it's not the end of it. Our first year of apostolic planning has to include a CDC. The CDC must be lived...to inform the Cursillo leadership of its essence, purpose, mentality, method, and charism. The leadership has to know the Charism very well so as to inculcate in us what is fundamental to being a Christian, which is one and the same as being a Cursillista.

We learned about the qualities of an authentic Leader, the benefits of regular Ultreya and Group Reunion, and the economics of Weekend Team Formation. The School of Leader's efficacy depends on properly structuring its contents, considering the nature of participation, understanding the rationale and benefits from it.

With our gained knowledge from all the CDC Rollos, we can now look into our future Apostolic Planning, focused on saturating our environment with the Cursillo charism. The key to all this gained knowledge is to understand Eduardo Bonnín's mentality and the origin of his ideas, values, and beliefs. Prompted and guided by the Holy Spirit, Servant of God Eduardo Bonnín passed on to the Laity and Mother Church the vision of building the Kingdom of God through genuine Friendship with God and Friendship with one another. De Colores!

*Verne Bowers
Diocesan Cursillo Coordinator
Diocese of Sacramento*