



ORGANISMO  
MUNDIAL DE CURSILLOS  
DE CRISTIANDAD

**MCC**

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Dear Friends,

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May the peace and love of Our Lord be always with you!

We would like to begin May's Monthly Bulletin by giving thanks to Our Lord because on May 4, 2007 he will have allowed our friend Eduardo Bonnin Aguilo 90 years of life, in dedicated and loving service to Him.

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY EDUARDO!**

What better gift can we give a person who has dedicated almost all his life to transmitting a Charism of the Holy Spirit than being faithful to the essence of that same Charism?

Pope Benedict XVI also made a similar petition to all the Movements and Ecclesial Communities at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress in Rome from May 26 to June 2, 2006. He told us we needed to study and deepen our understanding of our charisms in order to understand the mentality of the founder and apply it effectively.

Now that we are in the process of studying the Charism of Cursillos, in order to define what is Essential, Important and Accidental, we ask Our Lord to give us the wisdom to be able to see and understand that cursillos with other finalities, in reality are not Cursillos of Christianity because they are not within the essence of the Charism of "Cursillos of Christianity."

By studying the literature of the Pontifical Council for Laity, in the interview by Bishop Paul Joseph Cordes of Eduardo Bonnin, in the book *Signos de Esperanza- Retrato de Siete Movimientos Eclesiales* (Signs of Hope- A Snapshot of Seven Ecclesial Movements), we can verify the path the Holy See has indicated for us to follow in order to know the mentality of the founder of our movement.

Bishop Cordes states in his interview, "The Charism of Cursillos is intimately tied to the history of its founder. The movement was born in a precise moment in history, with particular demands, to which you gave an answer. In the light of your personal history, what were the first steps that gave rise to the birth of the experience of the movement?" And Eduardo told his experience...

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Following this he asked Eduardo, “Can you tell us how your charism is configured concretely?... How is it expressed in the people who take part in your movement?... Eduardo answers and clarifies that he does not like this “YOUR” and then continues to say, “In my way of understanding the charism has been configured with time through the embracing of it made each time; the people that take part, with the appropriate disposition, during the three days of cursillo understand the simple message and they try to translate it into the reality of their life each day. When they have learned in the cursillo at an individual level, they consolidate it and confirm it in their group reunion and at a social level by attending the Ultreya.”

We need to study and deepen our understanding of the Charism of the CCM in such a way as to understand the methodology, psychology and theology of the three days of the cursillo. And in this manner, fully understand the three personal and individual encounters that are trying to be achieved in those three days: The encounter with oneself, the encounter with God and the encounter with the others. The person cannot ever have this personal Encounter with God unless they have a total and sincere Encounter with themselves, which requires a totally bare openness of the person. And this is not possible when conditions, limitations or additions are adhered which are foreign or contradictory to its essence.

Since its beginnings, this deep understanding has been lacking, resulting in disengagement from the charism with specializations: Mixed Cursillos, one-day, two-day, specific age group, specific professions or economic or social level. All the specializations place obstacles for the original charism because their objectives have foreign conditions, limitations or additions that limit this openness of the person. For example, if a woman and man are in the same place, taking into account that their physiology, psychology and sensibility are very different, the interior openness necessary for the understanding of the message will not be achieved. Let us not forget that we are speaking of a personal and individual Encounter with Christ. Not a marriage or community encounter.

In the literature written by Eduardo Bonnin and others who have written about the CCM, we can also see how the Cursillos of Christianity were never thought to be mixed or specialized. It was always thought that they be for only one gender, men or women. Naturally, they began with men, but it was always the intention of Eduardo that there be cursillos celebrated for women. He struggled with Msgr. Hervas and with Fr. Juan Capo so that women could have the same right as men to attend a cursillo and not only as “wives of cursillistas” but rather as a PERSON (*Historia y Memoria de Cursillos*, F. Forteza). And from its origin, it was always sought that they be heterogeneous in ages, social classes, activities, etc. of the candidates.

It very well may be that Mixed Cursillos and/or Specialized are wonderful and it is so. This is how people who have lived the experience have described them. And blessed be God that they are bearing fruit as a means for people to come closer to God and the Church—Just as are many other Movements and Ecclesial Movements. But at the same time it should be affirmed that they are not Cursillos of Christianity. Just as Cursillo of

Christianity is not a marriage encounter or a retreat. They can be called by a different name, but not a type from the Cursillos of Christianity Movement. These “specialized” cursillos go against the very Mentality, Essence, Finality and Methodology of the Cursillos of Christianity.

Let us remember that at the last 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress in Rome we had 104 Movements and Ecclesial Movements present that are recognized by the Holy See. And there are still many more that are in the process of being recognized. As such, there is no need to change or remodel any Charism in order to respond to the signs of the times. Thank God and the Holy Spirit there are Charisms for almost every need of the Church. If the essential is changed, our identity is lost.

Kiko Arguello considered that Cursillos was lacking in “Formation and Clericalism” and he left the CCM to form the “Neocatechumenal Way” where there is a lot of catechesis formation and vocational seminars for the priesthood. The catechists and the priestly vocations are wonderful but they are not part of the Essence and Finality of the CCM.

Jaime Bonet considered that Cursillos was lacking in the “Word” as it is present in parishes, because the Word and its study is extraordinary, just as are missionary vocations of men and women and she separated from Cursillo and founded “Verbum Dei”.

Carlos Mantica, instead of changing the essence of the Charism of the CCM, also left Cursillos and began other Groups outside of the CCM, in order to respond to the signs of the times in which he was and is still living.

Antonio Punyed was also asked to give Cursillos only to Military personnel. He found it to be good but he did not name them Cursillos of Christianity, but rather Campeadas”. In the same way, Kairos was born (cursillos for prisoners). Many others have been born in the same way including “Youth Support Encounter”, Marriage Encounter, Pre-Marriage Encounter, Christian Family Movement, etc.

Seeing the signs and needs of the times, the Holy Spirit has illuminated other people and this is how many diverse movements and apostolic service have been born for adults, marriages, youth, children, prisoners, missions, catechists, catholic business people, contemplative prayer participants, etc. Even when some movements have taken a lot or a little from the womb of CCM, they have denominated themselves with other names which are now known. It is about maintaining order.

St. Augustine had a phrase that could very well apply to this topic and others like it, “Maintain order and the order will maintain you, because the splendor of order is called beauty.”

Eduardo Bonnin himself recognized that this order has not been achieved in part because of his own fault when in the same above-mentioned interview he admits, “As

far as cursillos go, dialogue was never possible. I must confess that sometimes I was incorrect by speaking in third person plural, but speaking in the first person singular bothers me. The best of all hypothesis is that it is my fault for having adopted the easiest solution by silencing the truths I have lived; but I haven't done so in order to take the easiest path, but rather because I have experienced in the flesh, an infinite number of times, that more importance is given to obedience than to the truth and it was my interest that cursillos continue in spite of everything.”

The Charism of CCM is based on the individual person and it aims totally to the singularity and to the most personal part of the person, to the most empty emptiness of their being, so that Christ might inhabit there and that with Him in their innermost being, by the Grace of God, they might feel singular, original and creative. And if we want this Charism to be updated and respond to the signs of the times, the people who apply its methodology need to be up to date on the Gospel, doctrine and the reality in which they find themselves and in which the world finds itself. In this way, their message will always be up to date in its response to the signs of the times without having to change absolutely anything of the essence of its Charism.

Dear friends, because of all your dedication and commitment to the CCM, we know the great love you have for this Kerygmatic Charism, which was given to us by the Holy Spirit. Let us unite in prayer, study, faith living and sharing of it so that we can understand more fully the great value it has and will continue to have for the evangelization of man, as long as we remain faithful to its Mentality, Essence, Finality and Methodology.

De Colores,



Juan Ruiz  
Presidente - OMCC

*A note from our Spiritual Advisor...*

“In my Father’s house, there are many dwelling places.” (John 14:2)

Several years ago, I came across a book about the Church titled *Here Comes Everyone*. In an authentically catholic church, there is something for everyone. Thus, we are truly a Catholic (universal) Church. Cursillos were not thought-up, planned and prated through in order to meet every pastoral need, but only for fermenting the lived experience of Christ’s grace in our daily environments by means of the shared living of the three encounters in a progressive way in friendship.

Pope John Paul II addressed the participants in the 1<sup>st</sup> World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities in Rome in 1998 as follows: “The ‘structure’ of a movement indicates a concrete ecclesial reality with predominantly lay membership, a faith journey, and a Christian witness which roots its own pedagogical method in a precise charism given to the person of the founder in specific circumstances and ways.” The Church and the world have been gifted with a multiplication of charisms so that one day “Christ might be all in all.”

Catholic Action was the seedbed of both the Cursillo and the Christian Family Movement, but the charisms of each of the two movements tracing their lineage to Catholic Action are very different from that of Catholic Action and distinct from the charism of each other. Eduardo Bonnin noted that “We were not against Catholic Action but distinct from it.”

In Miami, the Archdiocese in which I exercise my full-time ministry, the Cursillo has given rise to a host of other movements, two of which have spread to several other nations- *Kairos* and *Emmaus* (not to be confused with *Walk to Emmaus* which is a Protestant adaptation of Cursillo). *Kairos*, a prison ministry, has its own distinct identity and charism. Because of its interdenominational nature, several adaptations had to be made (especially the Sacraments Rollo). Also, it necessarily functions only in a circumscribed environment. Therefore, the fruits borne by *Kairos* are very valuable yet very distinct from those of Cursillo.

Emmaus came about in 1978, when Fr. David Russell of St Linus Church (Archdiocese of Miami) sought to have a “Cursillo-like” experience for the woman leaders of the parish in order to raise their consciousness so as to energize and develop new parish ministries. He commissioned Myrna Gallagher, the parish Director of Religious Education, to initiate a pilot project (both Fr. Russell and Myrna are Cursillistas). Myrna addressed Miami Cursillistas on March 25, 2007 regarding the origins and historical development of *Emmaus*. She lamented the accretions to Emmaus that have deviated the movement and made it nearly unrecognizable from the perspective of what she had in mind as the “foundress”. Nearly 30 years into its history, she is now writing a manual with which to guide the movement and return it to its roots. Sounds familiar? She recognized the very distinct purpose and charism of Cursillo and urged “Cursillo-Do what you do and be who you are!”

It is said that the tree of Cursillos will grow and expand only if it remains faithful to its identity, deepens its roots, and doesn’t grow apart from the trunk. Grafts to the tree are intrusive, deface the tree, and disfigure its identity. Juan Ruiz, in the article above, stated that “specialized” and “mixed” Cursillos have done much good but have not produced the fruit Cursillo was intended to produce. “There are many dwelling places...” If they are meeting needs which Cursillo is unable to address, that would indicate a need for a new identity to accommodate the different purpose and adaptations of the methodology.

Regarding “specialized Cursillos”, heterogeneity of religious practice, of social class, of educational level and of career, were always integral to the dynamic of the Cursillo. Without it, Cursillos would be too “inbred”, insular, isolated, and isolating. On a visit to Mallorca, I once had the experience of sharing in a group reunion of men who had lived the same Cursillo—they were of divergent ages and included a police officer, a butcher, and a lawyer. This diversity was not an obstacle but rather a catalyst to deep friendship. The same dynamic is at work on the Cursillo weekend.

Having been the spiritual advisor on both men’s and women’s Cursillos (nearly 50 times in each) I am in a position to observe that what “reaches” or “speaks” to men often is very different from what is effective with women. (Here I refer to the personal witness sections of the Rollos and also the style of presentation). The content and order of the Rollos and other activities may be the same, but the ambience is quite different. “Vive la difference!”

“Mixed Cursillos” impede or weaken the encounters with self and with Christ that are so necessary to Cursillo. We should bear in mind that we have so little time to introduce and foster the living out of the three encounters. In addition, we should consider that the “hallway work” (personal encounters outside of the time set aside for the Rollos and other scheduled activity) that is as important as the doctrinal content, would be severely distracted. Cursillo thrives in the field of friendship that is begun or deepened in the 3 Days. “Mixed Cursillos” are so overlaid with inter-gender agendas that they would cripple the development of that friendship, essential to Cursillo and which is to be lived in Group Reunion. Some have argued that co-ed Cursillos were “necessary” because of the inability to “fill up” a weekend composed exclusively of either sex. One should question why we schedule weekends before we have sufficient numbers of adequately prepared candidates. We should examine “why the ‘draught’ of candidates?” Is it because our living the life of grace is not sufficiently contagious or attractive?

To repeat the admonition of Myrna Gallagher—“Cursillo-Do what you do and be who you are!”

De Colores,

Fr. David Smith  
Spiritual Advisor - OMCC