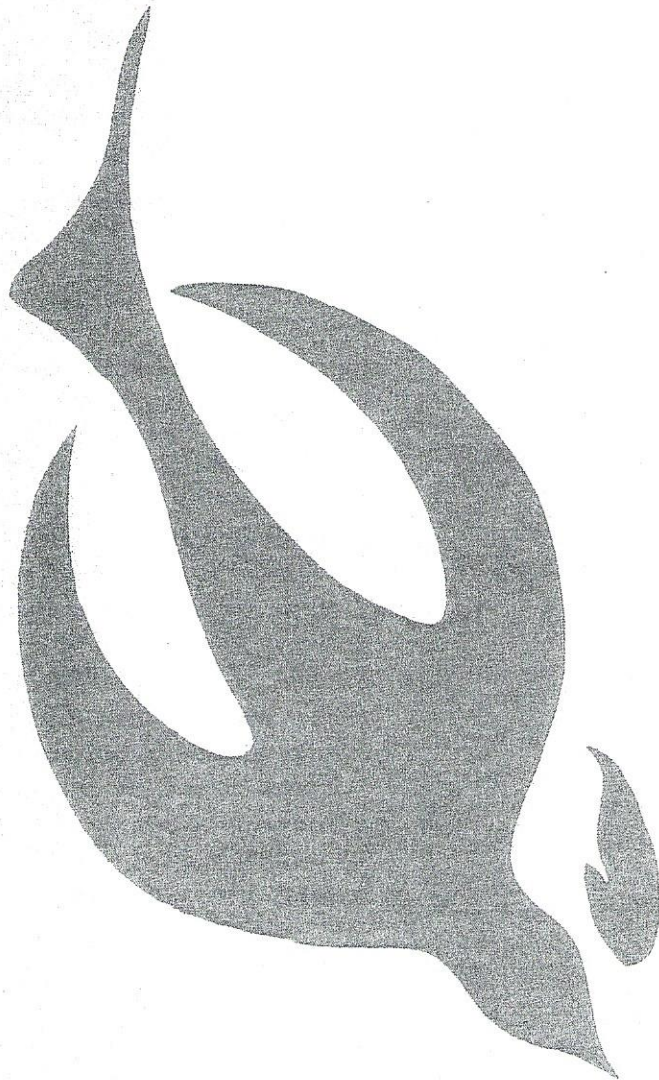


ULTRAYA

OCTOBER, 1971



Pre-Cursillo, Cursillo, Post-Cursillo

Edwardo Bonnin

Pre-Cursillo, Cursillo,

BY EDUARDO BONNIN

In the Cursillo Movement we should consider first what is essential. What is important and what is incidental will naturally flow from this, if we use a little common sense.

That which is essential defines the very nature of the thing; that which is permanent and changeless. Within the Movement there are some things one might change without disturbing the essential.

For example: the three day weekend could be compacted into two days, or perhaps extended to five days. This undoubtedly would not damage the essential, but it would destroy the simplicity, unity and clarity of the message.

The Cursillo is designed as a direct channel moving people from where they are to where they ought to be. It could be compared to a very wide beautiful new expressway that would enable a man to reach his destination without great difficulty. Naturally, it would be foolish to expect that this expressway would always pass near our homes to serve our own convenience.

When we speak about a Cursillo, we all know that we are talking about a group of persons that come together for three days to share. They share friendship, personal contact and joy. It is important to present clearly the purpose of the Movement. The question is, what is it these people want to achieve and how do they intend to achieve it? The Cursillo Movement attempts, and through the grace of God, achieves, in the individual; understanding, conviction, a living experience and a sharing of what is essential in Christianity.

Now, what is essential to Christianity? There must be love of God, love of neighbor and love of the world. But all this is enveloped in an ever greater reality that God loves us, that He seeks us and that He is waiting for us. The important thing to be conveyed is that this love of God, this love of world and love of our neighbor is made possible for us precisely because *God loves us*.

If faith is our point of departure, we have what is really faith, the nucleus. The Cursillo Movement

holds this tremendous treasure reserve; backing for the paper money that it would issue during the three-day weekend. Everyone is well aware that paper money, if it is to have any value, must have a gold reserve. Our gold reserve is this conviction, God loves us. This is the beginning of living Christianity. This is the starting point of Christianity.

Without this belief we would be like a person who has vast knowledge of many things but is unable to read or write. The intent of the Cursillo is to stimulate a hunger for God in the light of these truths.* Within the Church we have many things to satisfy hunger but not to create it. What we are striving for is to get the people to be profoundly and authentically Christian without ceasing to be what they are. Founded on this great truth that God loves them, is important.

When I love someone, I am certain of my love. But when somebody tells me that he loves me, I must take it on faith. Faith overcomes all. When I love somebody, I can prove it to myself. I can say that I have done this and that and the other thing which proves my love for him and just to remember this is enough proof. But, when we are loved, we are to *believe* we are loved.

We don't intend to take anyone away from his world but simply to *remain* in it and there be a witness to Christ. For example, in every city of any size, we find zoos where we see a tiger, a lion, an elephant, animals that have been taken away from their natural habitats, years ago. Little by little these animals cease to be jungle animals. We don't intend to build a zoo, but to go out and baptize the jungle.

Let a man be whatever he is; but *authentically Christian*. You know, we often do with Christians what we do with codfish. We cut off their heads and crush them into a small package. The Cursillo is the art of catching the entire fish with its head, its scales and its fins.

Post-Cursillo

The Cursillo is a display of everything that is Christian. A man of his own mind, one capable of conviction and decision, projects values, his life styles and his spirit through work and example in friendship. When such a person comes in contact with other persons also capable of their own convictions and decisions and who project their own lifestyles, spirits and values this contact develops, by way of reflection, a new consciousness which prestructures and reassesses their values so that they may share the same life. They become integrated in this way of life understanding it well, appreciating it and living it out sustained by prayer, meditation and action.

We are aware of the existence of the group of leaders, priests and lay people—not too many, now—just enough who are dedicated to the service of those who are making the Cursillo. They must be coordinated and the candidates must be open to them. It is not possible to help more than 35 candidates. A larger number becomes unruly, sometimes even a mob.

Everyone in the Cursillo must live the complete experience. Everyone—everything. . . prayer, study and action shared during meals, discussion, chapel, recreation. This sharing brings about an encounter with himself, with Christ, with his neighbor. Later on, these three encounters must be given their proper place within the perspective of action.

The most important thing about the Cursillo is that it be a solid chunk of reality, not just a conglomeration of unreal and imaginary things. It must be natural, authentic, without exaggeration. It must be a "truth encounter" with those participating. It must be true to life, true to the gospel and everyone must be open to each other. The environment must be one of frankness, cordiality and joyfulness. The personal content must be sincere for depth and understanding.

Thus we mean by faithfulness to the gospel
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On campus of Notre Dame, left to right: Mr. DeCastellanas, president of the Diocesan Secretariat in Tucson, Arizona; Eduardo Bonnin, lay founder of the Movement; and Fr. Marcel H. Salinas, Diocesan Director of the Cursillo Movement for the Church of Phoenix, Arizona.

Eduardo Bonnin of Mallorca, Spain is considered the prime lay expert of the Cursillo Movement. He travels internationally promoting the faithfulness to the Movement. He works in Cursillos about twice a year, sometimes as Rector, often as auxillary.

PRE-CURSILLO (from preceding page)

man must have the concept of Christ that is faithful and dynamic. Christ, God, furnishes the light with which we may be able to solve our own problems.

A total focus must be centered on the person. Only in this frame of reference can we properly evacuate all ideology and methodology and replace a greater emphasis on the ideas and the methods. If we withdraw our attention from the person we end up in a big mess. When we overemphasize the importance of slogans and verbal rituals instead of fostering true brotherhood, we often end up with victims. Those that conquer and those that are conquered—alone together.

We must deal with the person, who, as we have said, is capable of conviction and decisions and also free choice and great initiative respecting his individual personality. If we forget the importance of the person, instead of fostering this liberation, we might actually end up restricting him still further. Instead of promoting his development, we are actually complicating it.

The most profound desire in the human heart is to find meaning in life. This desire is evidently satisfied when one is conscious he loves God, his neighbor and the world and is loved by God. Every man wants to free himself from his fears. This is the life pattern of every man. What a man values and to what he aspires is where we must meet him.

It has been said, and is true, that a Cursillo has several phases. Now, the leaders, rather than concentrate on the various phases of the Cursillo, as a whole, must primarily be concerned with the process that the candidates are undergoing.

We are accustomed to speaking of the "state of grace." It would be more proper to speak of the process of grace that is initiated in each person. In a terminology that may not sound completely Christian, we could say that we are prodding the

person out of his present position by a constant bombardment of positive realities.

As Christians, we must be fully aware that there are two stages in our faith. Conversion which is charisma and knowledge, which is catechetics. To portray what is basic to Christianity, conversion, to evoke an encounter with God and to motivate an effective living out of the faith—this is charisma. Catechesis is the knowledge of what is basic to Christianity.

The faith of conversion contains all that is essential to the faith. Catechetics is not a perfecting of the faith but simply an explanation. Recalling the words of the Gospel, you remember that Centurian had complete faith. Christ praised that faith and remarked that He had not found such great faith in Israel. The thief on the cross also had this great faith. "Remember me when you enter into your kingdom." Both had the faith.

The fundamental part of the faith is openness to God. The rich young man in the Gospel had a tremendous Catechetics, but he did not have a conversion, that is, the faith of self-surrender. He had a lot of know-how, he knew many ways to be a Christian. He had even fulfilled the Commandments, but he did not have the openness, the total self-surrender.

The Cursillo Movement, and this has been the source of confusion, is directed toward the first to bring about conversion. Lots of times when an emphasis is placed on the duration of the Rollos, when an attempt is made to explain everything in the three days, we create a confusion. We produce an impression that this is a Catechetics and it can not be a Catechetics. There simply isn't enough time.

It is simply a matter of producing a great impact that leads to conversion. These excessively long Rollos are sometimes unbearable. In the attempt to explain, in the Rollo on Sacraments, the complete

sacramental theology, is a complete abuse—no one is able to stand all this.

From the very beginning, the Cursillo must be oriented to that which is positive in the person and in the community. Sometimes in that first meditation, in the example of the movie, an attempt is made to convince one that he is evil rather than to convince him that he is really unhappy. Instead of fostering a self-assurance, we should stimulate questioning. In self-assurance, he is susceptible to pride. Now, if he is left in a questioning mood he is bound to continue seeking the answers. Sometimes, evidence enslaves, self-assurance inflates but hope keeps us awake and spurs us on.

Our intent is to build what is fundamentally Christian upon that which is fundamentally human, mainly hope. Probably the explanation and precise understanding of what is essential will place what is important and what is incidental in proper focus. What is considered important must be that which most adequately brings about a realization of that which is essential. Whatever circumstances demand that which is essential must be realized. Now, what is incidental is that which may be freely added or subtracted.

We could now, as another view, give a few ideas on the Pre-Cursillo, Cursillo and Post-Cursillo. My greatest concern is the selection of candidates. Our failures can always be traced to a weakness in the Pre-Cursillo. Before one makes the Cursillo, we must know his life style and what are his attitudes.

This is made easier if the candidate has been in contact with the Cursillo community. There is a lot of common sense in the Pre-Cursillo that we must bear in mind. We seek individuals, personalities. Let us compare a person of strong personality to a locomotive that is pulling a number of cars. When this person is brought into a religious atmos-

phere without the cars, he ceases to be a locomotive. If you want to be assured that a person with this strong personality retains that strength of personality, he must bring into the Cursillo at the same time all who are responsible, those individuals over whom he exerts influence so that they may give him confidence in his role as a leader. Otherwise, he who is the locomotive, as it were, may not be a locomotive for God.

What is important in Pre-Cursillo is to be attentive to the moving spirit rather than to experience and motive. Actually, history is a record of mistakes. We must never be satisfied with past successes and feel that things are going well. There is always room for improvement. When speaking of the Pre-Cursillo, Cursillo, Post-Cursillo, we must remember that old saying: In questions of health, only he who inspects is good enough.

In the Cursillo itself, the most important thing is that everything is real, authentic and true to life. Here, one is not going to theorize, he is going to share himself immersed in the nucleus of Christianity. The love of God, the love of neighbor, and the love of the world finds an expression in the idealism, commitment and spirit of charity of the leaders and of those that will be led by them. All this means is to live by faith, hope and love.

In the Post-Cursillo, we must achieve, that which is lived in the three-day weekend, continues to be lived in everyday life. There is a variety of means to obtain this goal. But none of these should overshadow the value of life itself. A good group reunion and a good ultreya cannot be measured by the number of persons that attend or the spirit that prevails there. But rather by the fact that these individuals live by the spirit. Participation in Group Reunion must not arise from assignment or imposition. It must be the product of the free choice of individuals.

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PRE-CURSILLO (from preceding page)

With regard to the Ultreya now, let it be an emersion of the individual and his group in the pre-occupation and concern of all the other individuals and groups that participate in the Ultreya.

The Leaders School is not established to produce professionals in the apostolate, but rather to produce people who live the life they should, and who can serve as living witnesses and examples to the rest.

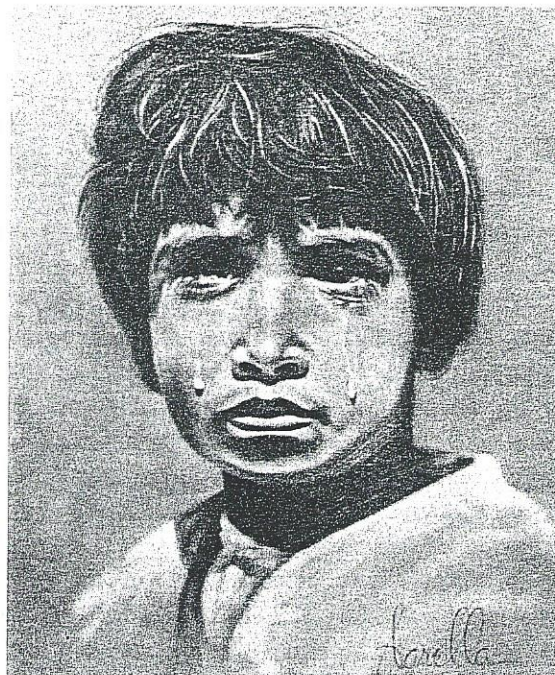
The Secretariat and all of us must never become control towers that issue commands, but a group of persons who humbly put themselves at the service of others. With this score of ideas as to what is essential, it is relatively easy with a little bit of common sense to see this relationship to all levels of the Cursillo Movement; to the Pre-Cursillo, Cursillo, Post-Cursillo, Group Reunion, Ultreya, Leaders School, Secretariat and in relation to other movements.

The important thing is that every person be aware of his own potential. It is important that the Resurrection of Christ be a reality for each person and that we do not complicate this Resurrection but that we may render it easier. The easiest and shortest route to arrive at all this is to follow the norms already given.

However, we must always keep in mind that everyone is only a means. The important thing is, of course, the spirit and that this spirit be filled with all the great ideas that are most concrete and effective today. We must remember this is true. Christ can become alive in each person.

We must remember that we don't possess all the solutions but that Christ Himself is the solution. Christ only uses us as instruments to provide solutions.

We must be keenly aware as the Holy Father has said that because man is not lost, great ideas will never be extinguished. Unity of the world will be achieved and the dignity of the human person will be recognized, social injustices will be eliminated, neither selfishness nor failure will impede the establishment of the truly human order. Because as Paul VI has said, "Christ has risen in every one of us."



Portrait of My Tears

Who is this small boy
crying softly in this place?
Our Savior's crucified. . .
he's gazing at His face.

What is he thinking, what does he see. . .
are his tears for you, are they for me?
Are they tears of sadness, or tears of joy
. . .the weeping of this little boy?

My eyes saw no tears
on his cheeks last night.
Did someone change that picture. . .
or were they hidden from my sight?

Now I see all the years that
my soul has slept. . .
For *me* he did not cry. . .
until *I* had wept!

— Joyce Kohl