



National Cursillo Movement

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Step by Step Rector's Guide

Presented by Alan Becker, Step by Step Committee Chairperson, at the 29th National Cursillo Encounter held at the University of Scranton – July 20, 2019.

Introduction and Historical Background

Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló, the Founder of the Cursillo Movement, entered his 5th Day on February 6, 2008. Many of his Holy Spirit driven inspirations are documented in My Spiritual Testament. After his death, faithful friends in Mallorca who had been working with him on his book My Spiritual Testament knew it was intended to include a Step by Step Rector's Guide plus Precursillo and a Postcursillo Appendices. They began the work of completing this document as Eduardo intended. This publication revision is on-going and the final projected publication date not yet available.

The study of the history of Cursillo shows us that Eduardo Bonnín, inspired by the Holy Spirit, taught us to look for the faraway. With this inspiration, he worked with friends to present the first Cursillo, then continued to present many more Cursillos. The results were so positive many people became inspired and eventually, as we all know, the Cursillo Movement went out to the whole world.

Eduardo was invited throughout the world by Cursillistas who wanted to understand the Cursillo better. In his travels outside of Mallorca, he quickly realized that the message he had received and shared was being lost due to adaptations, additions, eliminations and lack of understanding of the mentality by which they were developed. In 1958, Structure of Ideas was published. How many have studied this book?

With the Structure of Ideas book he presented the essentials of the mentality, purpose and methodology of the Cursillo Movement, this is what the intense study meetings called Cursillo de Cursillos are based on. How many of you have lived a Cursillo de Cursillos?

Eduardo saw with joy that through the study of Structure of Ideas and the Cursillo de Cursillos, many leaders began to understand that the Cursillo is not an organization but a movement. The leaders learned this movement is not only just "three days" then realized the importance of Precursillo and Postcursillo. In addition, the place of spiritual direction and coordination of international groups became better understood. It also helped leaders to realize that the purpose of Cursillo is to live our ordinary life in grace and Ultreyas must be witness based and not for educational training. These differences are essential to the living of the Foundational Charism. If we do not understand the difference, we can be doing many Christian things, but this is not the same as living the Charism inspired by the Holy Spirit. With this historical knowledge, we begin to see why it is important to study and be faithful to the mentality of our founder and essence of our movement's original charism.

Thanks to the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church began to study the worldwide Lay Movements, their founders and the Foundational Charism of each movement. This helped the

leaders of the Cursillo Movement talk about our beginnings and understand that it comes from the Holy Spirit. The founder is important because he leads us to the Charism. The Charism is important because it leads us to Christ in a specific way, which is specific to each movement.

In 1994, on the 50th anniversary of the first Cursillo, Eduardo reunited friends in Mallorca in order to invite Cursillistas from all over the world who were genuinely interested in understanding and living the authentic Cursillo - what was already known as the "Foundational Charism." Members of the United States National Secretariat accepted this invitation and went to Mallorca to participate in the first and second Conversations of Cala Figuera. Having this experience, they discovered changes had been made in the United States that were taking us away from the Foundational Charism.

In 1998, Saint John Paul II invited all the movements and ecclesial communities to return to their roots and to discern the mentality of their founders. This "call to our roots" resonated in 2006 with Pope Benedict XVI when members of the United States representing the World Body of Cursillos of Christianity (the OMCC) went to the Second World Congress of Lay Movements. The OMCC also made a visit to Mallorca and Eduardo to answer the call to study the founder's mentality. The result was to form more bonds of friendship and increase communication because we knew only with Eduardo's guidance could we make the changes to preserve the identity of the Movement.

In 2014, Pope Francis in the Third World Encounter of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities again called us to live the Gospel with joy, he said: "You do not have a small group ... No! A Movement! Always on the street, always in movement, always open to the surprises of God, which are in tune with the first call of the movement, that is, the Foundational Charism".

In 2017, the world Cursillo was being served by the Committee of Portugal. Together with them we celebrated the Fifth World Ultreya in Fatima at the 100th anniversary of Eduardo's birth. That committee made known to the world the biography they prepared. In this biography is the story of Eduardo and the Cursillos. How many of you have read Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló - 100 years Biography and Mentality?

History reveals to us the first call of our Cursillo Movement was in 1940 from Pope Pius XII, when he recognized that a large number of people had retired from the Christian life. "Pope Pius XII challenged the leaders of the Church to make every possible effort to bring back those Christian values." This speech touched Eduardo deeply and led him to make a profound study of the setting and environment. This resulted in the drafting of our first Rollo - THE STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT - that led to the development of the Cursillos in Christianity Movement.

In all this time, Eduardo included friends in his efforts. The leaders in Mallorca did not use a manual because they had the opportunity to dialogue with Eduardo himself. Their preparations consisted of person-to-person meetings. Eduardo preferred to study and meet with friends to talk about what they had studied. That is why some of his writings until today were compilations of notes that are intended to make us think deeply. It was precisely his humility that kept Eduardo from telling people what to do. He preferred each person discover for themselves, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that authentic encounters are only possible when we are truly sincere and seek the truth.

Up until 2005, we did not have a detailed outline for the Three Day Cursillo in writing from our founder. Eduardo knew he was not going to stay with us for long and he wanted to explain, “step by step”, the preciseness for each part of the Three Day Cursillo. In 2005, what started as a gathering of a few leaders from different parts of the world became another meeting of many in Mallorca to have what were called the “Jornadas” or Days with Eduardo. He gave the rollos and priests gave meditations. In 2007, he wrote one of the few books with only his name, called My Spiritual Testament. In this Testament, he expressed the need to write in detail, essentially “step by step”, what the Cursillo of Christianity consists of. Eduardo had some leaders work with him to develop what would be an appendix to My Spiritual Testament. Unfortunately, Eduardo died before finishing this final project. Those friends who worked with him, Ramon Rosello, Miguel Sureda, Arsenio Pachon and Enrique Benito, are taking this work to conclusion using what they completed and the notes that he left on the rest.

As you can see and hear, Ramon Rosello and Miguel Sureda, who is with the English group right now, are with us at this National Encounter.

How did the Step by Step get to the US?

In 1994, Tom Sarg, the former Executive Director of the National Cursillo Center, attended the First Conversations at Cala Figuera. However, it was not until he attended the Second Conversations in 2002 that he realized we were traveling down the wrong path. Tom planned a trip for the National Staff to meet with Eduardo in Mallorca. Inspired by this encounter with our founder, they began the task to return us to the Foundational Charism. In July 2003, the National Secretariat officially decided to follow the Foundational Charism.

In 2006, Jorge Barcelo sought Eduardo’s guidance in order to develop the current Cursillo Manual that put us even closer to the Foundational Charism. Although Eduardo reviewed the rollo titles and sequence of the United States manual that is currently being used, it is not yet consistent with his “step by step” and Foundational Charism.

In 2014, the US National Secretariat decided to review the US manuals and study how to update them. We communicated with the leaders of Mallorca and learned about the “step by step” project they had in progress. In 2015, we returned the Pilgrims Guide to its original form and in July 2016, the Spiritual Advisor’s Manual was published to reflect the intent of the Step by Step.

In 2016, a committee was formed from the National Secretariat to review the Step by Step Guide, understand the why of what it contains and share this with all other Cursillistas. By 2018 the committee, including members from all language groups, together decided the best way to share this was by following the founder's example. We had to study the Step by Step, invite others to study and determined the best method to accomplish this is through workshops.

This Step by Step is not a manual to train Cursillistas on what to do during a Three Day Cursillo, but a guide so that Cursillistas can understand the “why” of each element in the movement as it was intended. Workshop rollos were developed and a workshop format was written to guide our present and future Regional and Diocesan workshops. We want everyone to study this Rector’s Guide and search for how this guide can make the Three Day Cursillo a more efficacious instrument in the Movement and the Church. Let us avoid the temptation, that as Eduardo put it,

leads us to seek to make the Cursillo easy for us. Rather, we must understand that as leaders our role is to make those encounters easier for the new Cursillistas. It would be simple to keep our Three Day Cursillo as we currently conduct them. However, as leaders we should be motivated by Eduardo's inspiration to study the faraway to allow more new Cursillistas have a deeper encounter with self, Christ and others. Let us recall several real conversions from the Gospels, for example Zacchaeus, Matthew, Peter and Paul. They were not looking for Jesus to change His ways, they looked for opportunities to grow and more faithfully follow "the Way, the Truth and the Life." Today, we must ask ourselves, how can I give more, how can I make up for my past shortcomings, how can I love you more, how can I proclaim the Gospel more faithfully? These are the leaders we want to be today, don't we?

The Step by Step Rector's Guide is part of Eduardo's Spiritual Testament to us. Therefore, we should not make changes to it. Every change that was not guided by the founder runs the risk of deviating from the purpose and adding sentimentality and other manipulations that come from wanting to change without understanding how each piece of the Cursillo is assembled.

On November 10, 2018, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, the first Step by Step Introductory Workshop was presented to all Regional Coordinators and selected Region Service Team Members.

On January 18, 2019, a communication Memo was sent from the National Secretariat to the Diocesan Lay Directors of all Language Groups. This Memo introduced the Step by Step Rector's Guide to the US Cursillo and informed all groups this Introductory Workshop will be presented at all Spring 2019 Regional Encounters throughout the United States. How many of you have attended a Regional or a Diocesan Step by Step Introductory Workshop this past Spring? How many of you have asked questions? We must be allowed to ask many questions about the "why". When we understand "why" then we will know how to do it all very well.

When studying the Step by Step we see the focus is not just how to present a rollo, but rather how to develop the friendship by which the message of the rollos can be better understood. The Step by Step explains very well the importance of giving the person the freedom to make decisions as this is the path where conversion can be deeper. Keeping our role as leaders simple, we give the Holy Spirit fuller access to the hearts and minds of the Cursillistas.

Benefits and Successes from the Workshops

All twelve United States Cursillo Regions have now conducted at least one Step by Step Introductory Workshop during their respective Spring 2019 Regional Encounters. Overall the attendance has increased over past Regional Encounters and interest has been very energetic! In addition, several workshops have been presented throughout the US at the diocese level. The response has been an overwhelming sense of gratitude, enthusiasm and unity. The gratitude has been for receiving this gift from Eduardo Bonnín. The members serving on the Step by Step Committee understand that we must not lead others down a path that is made up by us. The benefit of receiving guidance directly from our founder means we will be following the authority that the Church recognizes for the method and purpose of Cursillo.

Enthusiasm has come from understanding. There have been very many excellent and challenging questions. These questions have led to more study and allowed further and deeper understanding.

The dialogue has given all of us opportunities to notice the details of the Three Day Cursillo in a new light based on the Foundational Charism. The excitement is a new understanding that every part has meaning and purpose.

Finally, unity of purpose and joy has been experienced beginning with the National Secretariat forming the national Step by Step committee. Representatives of Vietnamese, Spanish, Filipino and English-speaking Cursillistas from across the United States Cursillo Movement have all worked together. When we see unity like this, we can be sure it is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. As was said at the Fifth World Ultreya when the Cursillo Movement was consecrated to Our Lady of Fatima and on Eduardo's 100th anniversary of birth, "The time of Cursillo is Now!"

With the simpler Step by Step Rector's Guide, we can now follow the command Christ gave his apostles in Matthew 10:9-10 (The Commissioning of the Twelve) "Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. The laborer deserves his keep". Jesus teaches us, even today, the importance of simplicity. Missionaries are always encouraged to travel light and rely on the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gave the Church this wonderful charism 75 years ago, and Eduardo Bonnín, with all his humility and generosity, spent his whole life explaining it to us. Let us not make the Holy Spirit wait any longer, "The time for Cursillo is now".

How Do We Best Prepare Ourselves to Present the Three Day Cursillo Using the Step by Step Rector's Guide?

Even after each diocese completes the Step by Step Rector's Guide Introductory Workshop, the work does not stop. We recommend using our proven and familiar Cursillo method of Piety, Study and Apostolic Action to witness and prepare the leaders in your diocese for future Three Day Cursillo.

Piety: During your prayer time, at home or Eucharistic Adoration or wherever you are, take the Step by Step Rector's Guide and Appendices and ask Almighty God for enlightenment. Especially take the sections you do not readily understand. Read them slowly and pray over them. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and reveal to you the method and purpose of the particular areas you have questions about. As the Rector's Guide points out, we should be leaders who go to the Lord. If we are not making regular visits to the Lord, let us all think about growing in that area.

Study: The Secretariat and the School of Leaders are the Cursillo structures that provides the best way to discuss and learn together. Prepare a section of the Step by Step Rector's Guide or Appendices for discussion and listen to everyone's views and inputs. Especially focus on sections your fellow leaders and friends have questions about. Feel free to develop follow-up questions and do not hesitate to contact any Committee member for follow-up answers. The Step by Step Committee is available to serve you well beyond the Introductory workshop presentations. We have recommended other books to study also such as My Spiritual Testament, Structure of Ideas, An Apprentice Christian, Signs of Hope, and Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló - 100 years Biography and Mentality. These books and others that Eduardo offered us over the years, give us a unique insight into the depth of the Holy Spirit. The writings from the World Congress explain to us that this unique insight is what a founder offers a movement to keep us faithful to its Foundational Charism.

When we study together, let us always keep in mind that we do not have total understanding. But we should know that Eduardo was so mindful to give an explanation for everything. As we study the Structure of Ideas, many leaders have been amazed to discover pages where Eduardo listed where he got everything for the Cursillo. He did this to keep Cursillo both Catholic and Apostolic. Eduardo lists the works of the Saints and Doctors of the Church as well as many theologians. He states the references are too many to list in the book, but he kept all those references catalogued in his office. Why are we amazed at this discovery? Because the more we study Eduardo's work, the more we discover the Gospel. Jesus said, "I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father." [John 15:12-15] Imagine this? Jesus gave an explanation for everything. So did Eduardo. This is how we know we are servants and not trying to be masters, when we give explanations for what we believe in. Are we able to give explanation for what we ask others to do in the Cursillo? How wonderful that Eduardo did. This is how we know we can follow him as a leader that will lead us to Christ and to the Church. So, let us study this way. Shall we?

Apostolic Action: As we know, our Apostolic Action must begin with our personal Piety plus our personal Study and discussion with others. This is how Eduardo Bonnín explained the Cursillo concepts consistently over the years – discussion with a group of friends. With solid Piety and Study legs of the Tripod we will develop our conviction to be fully prepared for our Apostolic Action. Be that leader for your diocese to begin and continue the discussion about implementing the Step by Step. Be willing to support others to understand the "why" of each element of the Three Day Cursillo. Follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and step up to contact others in your Region or our Committee to seek further guidance and explanation. Remember, Christ is counting on you!

The Job Ahead

The Step by Step Rector's Guide, Appendices and Lay Rollos to conduct the Three Day Cursillo are now available to download free of charge from the National Cursillo website for a limited time. The National Cursillo Center is working on the publication of these documents and will have them for sale, in hard copy form, through the National Cursillo Bookstore.

Many Regional Coordinators and Service Team Members presented the Step by Step Introductory Workshop during their respective Spring Regional Encounters. They are prepared and willing to come to your diocese to present this Introductory Workshop based on your schedule. The Step by Step Introductory Workshop provides an excellent opportunity for the Cursillo leaders (specifically Secretariat and School of Leaders members) to ask questions and understand the "why" of the Step by Step guidance. Once you attend a workshop, you are expected, as a Cursillo Leader, to lead the further study and dialogue at your School of Leaders and Team Formation sessions. Your leadership is critical, especially for those team members who did not attend the Introductory Workshop. The Cursillo leaders for each diocese will need to discern when team members have the necessary understanding and conviction to implement the Step by Step Rector's Guide for the Three Day Cursillo.

Additional resource information to include a list of Frequently Asked Questions as well as the Reference Guide for Step by Step are available from your Region Coordinator. The Step by Step

Language Committee members will be available to serve as resource persons for the Regional Coordinators and Diocesan Secretariats to answer questions that may come up in the future.

In Conclusion

From the words of our beloved founder Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló, “If Cursillo is to remain faithful to the purpose for which it was intended and for which it was prayed and for which we have been grateful, it should not lower its target, and every Cursillo weekend should offer those present a lively, simple, clear and true experience of the Christ of the Gospel as best as possible”.

De Colores!!!

