

Region 11 Encounter

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Why is learning our Cursillo history important?

I hope this question awakens us, creates restlessness, to perhaps move us from where we are to where we should be.

First, allow me to share a little of my personal experience. Back in 1999, which was just after having lived the three-day Cursillo, we were given the opportunity at School to engage in what are called *Conversations of Cala Figuera*. This study was giving me a deeper understanding of the importance of what I had just experienced in Cursillo and showed me a path forward. I was so encouraged to find out these conversations between friends had started in the place where Cursillo was born and that we could join in this conversation. Whoever thought up these cursillos really had a plan that I could be part of.

When I continued to study these Conversations of Cala Figuera, I wondered who thought up these topics and why? And who is Eduardo Bonnin? Why did the chapter he wrote about Friendship sound like it came from the Cursillo I just lived? Then I heard there was going to be a World Ultreya, and I was amazed because this meant that Cursillo had no boundaries to stop it and that is what I always wanted to be a part of.

There at the World Ultreya, I met Eduardo. It was brief. I let him know I liked what he wrote about Friendship, and he told me that it was simply the Gospel. What did he mean by that was my next question? But whatever he meant he sure made it clear that the Gospel is what's important. As I kept studying, I found out that these *Conversations of Cala Figuera* came from the idea to keep delving more deeply into the understanding of the Charism of Cursillo from the perspective of being Lay persons.

Then in 2000 I was given the opportunity to translate Eduardo's Biography, *An Apprentice Christian*, into English. It was then that I realized he had done a lot more than just write on the topic of Friendship for those Conversations. *An Apprentice Christian* is written from a series of interviews with Eduardo. After reading that book there was no doubt in my mind that Eduardo was not only the leader that the Holy Spirit chose to bring us the Cursillo, but that Eduardo was the leader I and millions of others needed so that we could understand that we were being called to encounter Christ.

But I noticed that there was a group of people that didn't like it when Eduardo's name was mentioned, and I wanted to know why.

Then I was called to serve with the World Organization of the Cursillo Movement (OMCC) and we focused on the Study of the Charism in response to the magnificent call from the Pope to all movements to mature and to return to our roots and know our founders. We are at a time when numerous lay movements are experiencing the passing away of their founders and are being called to mature and to continue to grow from our roots.

By this time, which was 2006, I had learned there were two ways of providing growth to the Cursillo movement. One came directly from the roots of the Cursillo and the other was to revise it and renew it

with ideas that did not come from the roots. One way always remains connected with what the Church calls the Foundational Charism. The other has made many efforts to disconnect from those roots.

So, do we realize how important it is for us to study the history of the Cursillo?

Let's look at a few things that can be helpful to responding to this question. Remember from the Study Rollo:

"True piety must be conscious and informed."

"Piety that is not emotional, but reflective and solid is the child of study."

"When our understanding has been enlightened, our will moves with more brilliance, with more light new things are seen and one has the necessary strength to overcome obstacles."

Again, I would like for us to refer to what we learned from Cursillo. Study is at the service of Piety. So, simply put, our study is to serve our relationship with self, Christ, and others.

Self--Each of us has the need of participating in the Cursillo movement. To be true to self we want to know what we are a part of and what does it mean that I lived a Cursillo so that we can be 'Conscious, informed, and reflective' as active participants. The more we realize what is at stake the more fully we will be able to give of ourselves to the Movement without reservation.

Christ- consider each of us has been invited into a friendship with Christ and to be true to this friendship we want to be solidly convinced of where this gift came from. The more we realize this gift is truly "just the Gospel" as Eduardo said, then we can be more solid in our decision that this gift is not for us alone and this conviction will give growth to our Movement by sharing it as a gift we received from Christ and not something that is ours.

Others- We should never forget that Cursillo has come to us through the testimony of others who came before us. The Cursillo was passed on so that we can learn to proclaim God's love to others. If we are satisfied instead of restless then we might be settling with doing our own will. The Charism is found at the roots of the Cursillo. The more truth we discover about the roots the truer our action will be to the Charism.

When we want to investigate what happened at a certain event in the past, the best person to ask is an eyewitness. If we want to know what happened at a car accident, we ask the people in the accident and those who were eyewitnesses. They will tell you what happened at that particular accident. But if you want to know about car accidents in general, you will be asking how many accidents there are in the United States per year, or how many accidents there were in Canada last year. For this you don't ask an eyewitness. You will go to a statistician or someone like that. Why does this matter? Well do we want to help the people involved in the accident or do we just want to know more about accidents? This can happen to us with our study of Cursillo.

One of the tools used in the study of History is a timeline. By studying the History of Cursillo we can go to the beginning of the timeline to those events which came from a special action of the Holy Spirit which can be called foundational events. To know what happened in the beginning of Cursillos, we must talk to the eyewitnesses. But if we want to know what people think about the beginning and what importance it has for them, we can talk to just about anyone and they will give us their perspective from

where they are on that timeline and based on what they participated in. The person that leads in the foundational events, by definition, is the founder. If we seek the founder, we will be able to help keep the Cursillo as it was intended to be. If not, it will be just about anything. And if that happens it will be about nothing.

Some of you might have had the same experience I had, hearing from some leaders that learning about what Eduardo had to say about Cursillo was somehow a problem. I certainly don't ever want to be a fanatic, but I don't want to be ignorant and without direction either.

One thing we need to learn is that Eduardo was silenced. He was silenced out of an apparently 'good intention' to keep Eduardo from the spiritual dangers of taking the credit for what he had done. And perhaps this rigorous penance did him loads of good. The man is in the process of beatification for his reputation for being holy. But this order for silence does not bind us. The silence was keeping us from the truth. And a study that silences the truth or ignores it leads us to be blind followers.

Before Eduardo passed away, he realized that we would need to know the truth and he left it for us in his last works, *History of a Charism* is one of them. In it, Eduardo wrote about the leaders that have made every effort to disconnect the Movement from its roots,

“Unfortunately, though, what they did has unintentionally misdirected the Cursillo Movement. This has sent it down a different path from the one it could no doubt have followed had it not been in a certain manner kidnapped with the best will and eagerness to “update” it.

“We promptly protested: we did it three times, in writing and on different occasions, but we were not heard. It is understandable that we were not listened to because, as I said in the beginning—and want to repeat it because it is true – the history of the Cursillo was falsified by those in authority. This was not done with bad intentions but because they simply had bad information or no information at all. That is why these same authorities considered any observation we made about Cursillo to be an unfortunate intrusion. We, who, after much thinking, praying and reflecting, conceived of, structured and wrote all the lay rollos. Doing it with the motive and goal of reaching the persons who were faraway. We are not naïve enough to think that the Cursillo is owned by its founders; Cursillo is of the Church. But when a shipping company buys a ship, it is important to know all the secrets of its construction so that they can get the most out of it.

...We are striving to see that the Cursillo Movement is not underestimated by becoming the object of a few votes. Instead, we want it to be, as it has always been for us, an attentive listening to the voice of the Spirit Who has always clarified the way to follow: with our sights on the faraway, the signs of the times, and common sense. (page 8)

Eduardo also writes in the book *History of a Charism*, about the many trials of “*blood, sweat and tears*” as he put it, that were endured for the Cursillo to come to be. He lets us know with great detail how the Cursillo came to be as each part was put into place [p.13]. Then he writes:

“A meeting was held in 1972 in Mallorca at the Hotel Taurus. There it was agreed, at the inspiration of the founders, and thanks to the help of Fr. Jose M. Cascales of Vienna, that it seemed a very good idea to write down some fundamental ideas of the Cursillo Movement. This was so that we could possibly reach a unity of the message.” ...

and he writes very positive hopes he had for the project but then he explains how the 2nd edition “had no layman who had been present in the hard and painful gestation of the foundational charism of the Cursillo Movement. Thus, Cursillos’ roots were ignored.”

And on page 22 [*History of a Charism*] he writes,

“It is necessary to return to the original ideas that gave life to the Cursillo. ...And this is not because we have a nostalgic and narrow-minded attachment to tradition, rather it is because it is something that constitutes the **very essence** of the Cursillo Movement. What has been done has taken it outside its proper focus by changing its perspective. ...If you do not deeply understand the **purpose** of Cursillo, the motive and the goal that we proposed, and that the founders cannot stop proposing, it is clear that such a thing is unimportant to you. Cursillos’ purpose is to succeed in drawing close to those who are **faraway**.”

And in conclusion, I ask myself what blood, sweat and tears have we shed so that the history of Cursillo will continue with our search for the faraway, with our attentive listening to the voice of the Spirit that directs our actions in a way that is faithful to the Foundational Charism?