

Cursillo in Christianity

Cursillo (pronounced kur-SEE-yo) is a Spanish word meaning 'little course'. The full name, *Cursillos de Cristiandad*, means 'Cursillo in Christianity'. Cursillo is a worldwide lay movement which began with the first weekend in 1944 on the island of Mallorca, Spain. In the 1960s, Pope Paul VI officially designated Cursillo as a renewal movement of the Church and named St. Paul as its patron and protector.

The Cursillo Movement is a powerful instrument for restoring the world to Christ with its focus on the Person. Those who attend a Cursillo Weekend are given an understanding that it is possible to live as a Christian in normal everyday life and a desire to journey with Christ. It is a 'lived experience' of Christian community. It also provides a practical means to continue one's Christian walk which is encouraged during the three-day course.

Explaining about Cursillo to someone who has never experienced Cursillo is at best, difficult. Although there is nothing 'secret' in Cursillo, no one can fully explain how God touches each person in His personal and unique way. Attendees on Cursillo Weekends are normally sponsored by other members of the movement and specific questions are best directed to sponsors.

Not a Retreat

The basic atmosphere of a Cursillo Weekend differs from the solitude of a retreat and is meant to be experienced once. During the three days, the teachings of Christ are discussed in a spirit of joy and celebration and the lived witness of ordinary people, who have discovered what it is to live in Christ, is shared. A Cursillo Weekend is not a prayer group, a short course in theology, a forum for social doctrine, a course in apologetics or group therapy, but is a proclamation of the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus and the understanding that we are the Church which brings His presence and message to our homes and communities.

The Weekend Format

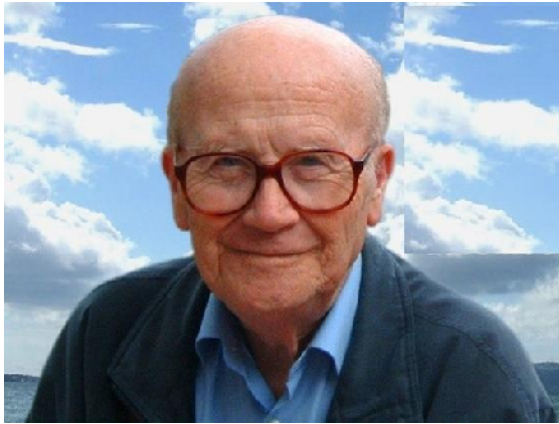
The Cursillo Weekend normally begins on a Thursday evening and ends on Sunday. During the three days, a team of lay men or women (Weekends are not co-ed) and a priest or spiritual advisor give a series of witness talks about Christian living. Table groups participate in a discussion period following each talk. Daily mass is celebrated and the opportunity for Reconciliation is provided. There are meditations, times for personal reflection and quiet as well as fun and socializing in a supportive Christian community.

A Cursillo is an encounter with oneself, with Christ and with others. The presentations are designed to help the participants to better know themselves, to know Jesus more deeply and finally to suggest ways to take what is learned back to one's environments.

The Fourth Day

During the 'Fourth Day', the time after the three-day Cursillo weekend, perseverance is important to help one continue to draw closer to Christ. Weekend participants are encouraged to meet regularly for ongoing friendship and support in small groups of friends and in larger gatherings called 'ultreyas'. This Cursillo method, introduced on the Weekend, is a unique and effective way to continue the walk with Christ begun on the Weekend and to sustain it for life. It is a means of personal growth in living what is fundamental for being a Christian and for encouraging one another in spreading the Good News that 'God loves you'. The Cursillo approach to evangelization is the very natural act of being Christ-like in all one's words and actions.

*A Cursillo is three days long,
but lasts a lifetime.*



The founder, Eduardo Bonnín, defines Cursillo as follows:

“The Cursillo in Christianity is a movement that by means of its own method attempts, from within the Church, to ensure that the realities of Christianity are brought to life in the uniqueness, the originality and in the creativity of each person. From their deep conviction, their freedom finds the right direction, and they discover their potential and accept their limitations, thus their will is strengthened. Friendships are developed by virtue of their decision and perseverance in their daily, personal and community life.”

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CURSILLO IN CHRISTIANITY



“...the Cursillo method aims at helping transform, in a Christian way, the milieus where people live and work through the involvement of ‘new men and women’ who have become such from their encounter with Christ.”

- Pope John Paul II