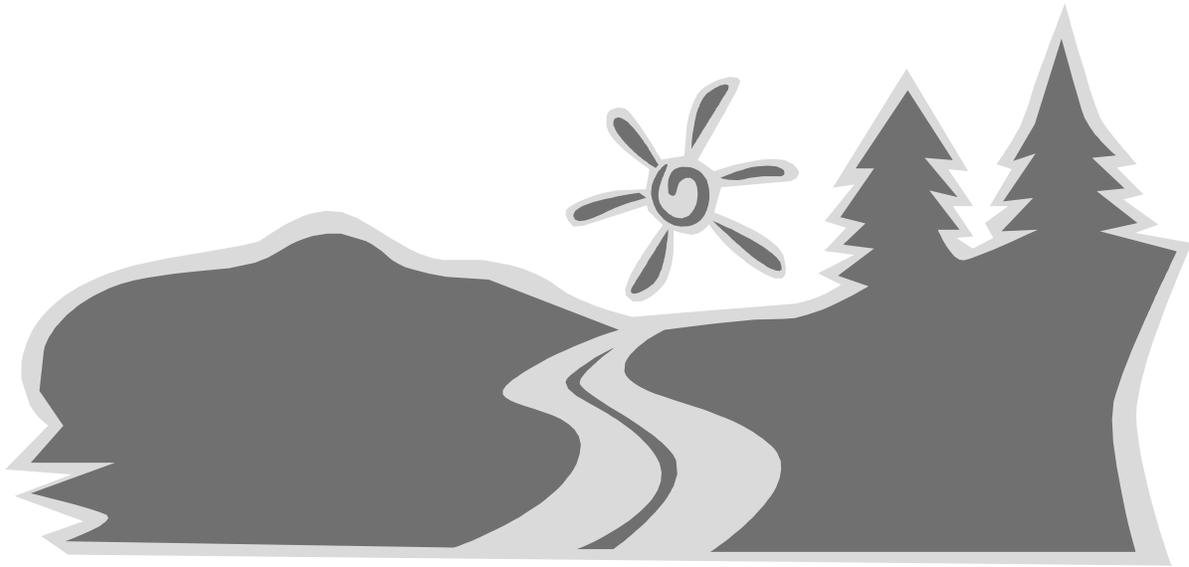


Fully Alive



THE NATIONAL BULLETIN OF THE CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC CURSILLOS

prepare the way of the
LORD.



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OFFICERS' CORNER

We are pleased to announce that there are two new faces on the Officers' Group.

Dave Madsen replaces Bill French as the Officer from Ontario, and Debborah O'Shea replaces John Oetter as the officer from the Western Region.

Plans are underway for the 2004 Conference which will be hosted by the Cursillistas of the Grouard McLennan diocese, and held at the college in Grande Prairie, Alberta. Please put this important date on your calendar and make it a priority in your Cursillo activities for next year. June 17-20th. The theme will be announced early in the new year.

On the international scene, Tom Sarg, Executive Director of the United States Cursillo Movement has resigned his position and the US executive is busy finding his replacement. As was reported in the last issue of Fully Alive, the United States Cursillo Movement is now taking the same steps that Canada took in 1994 after the I Conversations of Cala Figuera and is studying the ten topics of those conversations as being crucial to a proper understanding of the Foundational Charism and the Cursillo Movement.

As the seat of the NA/CG (North American/Caribbean International Group) a representative from Canada attended an important event in Mallorca, Spain. The OMCC (Organismo Mundial de Cursillos de Cristiandad) the world body, met with Eduardo Bonnin and representatives from the international groups to discuss the Foundational Charism, The Fundamental Ideas, Ecclesiality of the Movement, and the organizational structure of the OMCC.

Although the time available did not allow for some of the topics to be covered, a statement was produced and signed by Eduardo Bonnin. Tony Coutinho, president of the OMCC signed on behalf of the OMCC executive. This document, and other information will be available as soon as the approved texts are finalized. As the meeting was conducted wholly in Spanish, the representative from NA/CG asked for time on the agenda to give a short presentation outlining Canada's journey and the work we have done to promote the Foundational Charism. The presentation was read in English and translated into Spanish by one of the Mallorcan leaders who was present. This presentation can be read at the end of this column.

The standing Officers met for two and a half days in August to finalize business from the past year and a meeting of the full group took place in Montreal at the beginning of December.

We are happy to announce that the CCCC website is now up and running. It is still a work in progress but already we are receiving positive response and have received orders for some of our available literature, from the US and as far away as Czechoslovakia. The address is www.cursillo-canada.org Please visit the site and give us your comments and suggestions. Pay a visit also to the virtual School of Leaders and post your reflections on the posted topics on the electronic discussion board. The site will be updated frequently so visit often to see what is new.

The CCCC Resource Centre in Montreal, continues to function and receives many enquiries regarding Cursillo topics and documents that are available as resource material for the Schools of Leaders. All communications received at the Centre are forwarded to the appropriate officer to be dealt with. Correspondence is sent out from the Centre to ensure that an accurate record is kept of all communications.

Eduardo Bonnin has recently published a book entitled, *Historia de un Carisma, History of a Charism*. In the book an article on Enculturation, written by Barry Guihan, past chair of the CCCC and published in Fully Alive is included. Eduardo has prefaced the article with the words, "*Carta Que Explica Con Exacta Precision Lo Que El Cursillo Pretende*" which translated says, A letter which explains precisely what the Cursillo is.

Eduardo has also included in his book the letter that was written in response to Barry's article and sent to CCCC. In it, the writer suggested that: "...this is so important, in my view, that if the CCCC decides to continue on its current path, it should be dissolved immediately,...." This is prefaced by Eduardo with the words, "*Carta Que Revela Que a Pesar de su Buenísima Voluntad no ha Captado el Mensaje*". A letter that reveals, that in spite of his good will, he has not captured the message.

We only mention this here because it demonstrates quite clearly that the journey that CCCC is on is very much in tune with the Foundational Charism, and the vision of Eduardo. The fact that this article was included in a book by Eduardo Bonnin in which he is attempting to clarify the Foundational Charism and

the manner in which it was given, validates the continued journey that CCCC began in 1992 and became very serious about in 1994.

**Presentation to the meeting between
Eduardo Bonnin and the OMCC
November 12, 2003, Mallorca**

Although I have not been able to comprehend most of what has been said and shared at this meeting, as the representative from the NA/CG I think that it is important that I participate in some way. To aid the translation process, it was easier to write something than to try to speak and have someone translate.

From what Miguel has shared with me so far, there has been much talk of unity, of the Foundational Charism, is it ecclesial or lay, who can discern it etc, etc.

I can only share with you the experience that Canada has had, and which now the United States is beginning, in our journey of rediscovering that Foundational Charism.

Some of you may not realize that Canada held the seat of the OMCC from 1990 to 1994. When we took it over, being very new to the international scene, we had no clue as to what our job was to be, what we were being called to. In our naiveté, we had the idea which has proven to be momentous, both in our own Movement and around the world, to go to the Founder to ask him what he had in his mind at the beginning, what was his thinking, what was his vision, how he accomplished what has happened in the years since he was a young man when he made his own Catholic Action Cursillo in 1943, and wrote and presented the Rollo, Study of the Environment, shortly after.

Cursillo came to Canada in 1963, and already at that time, it came across the border from the United States with many variations. These variations and adaptations meant that in 1990, although we had a very active Cursillo Movement which had spread across the whole country, we had a Movement that had a different face depending on where in the country it was experienced. (Canada is a very large country crossing 4 ½ time zones)

When we hosted the first OMCC meeting in Toronto, we had the audacity to invite Eduardo to come and be with us. He was not allowed much opportunity to speak at the meeting as there were major players there from the different international groups. However, the OMCC group, took the opportunity to spend approximately 5 days with him, listening to

him and asking him questions. From what he told us, we quickly learned that the Cursillo Movement that we thought we understood so well, was very far away, in many respects, from what he envisioned in the beginning. For the first time we heard about the Distant Ones, or Faraway; that it was a Movement for the World, that we are called to become the Good News and to live it right where we are and that the structure is only there to support, not to choke. Eduardo spoke at our National Encounter in 1992 and Canadian Cursillistas began to hear the wisdom and simplicity and to witness the humility of Eduardo Bonnin.

Our national Spiritual Advisor was deeply affected, this was not the Cursillo he knew, it was different to all we had learned from the literature, which so often contradicts itself. He came to Mallorca and spent 10 weeks, studying with Eduardo and other Mallorcan leaders; he was given access to many documents, and he met with Father Segui. He came back to Canada with a fire in his heart. And we began to study and reflect on the documents that Eduardo made available to us.

In 1994 we came to the I Conversations of Cala Figuera and had another shock. We didn't hear talks on topics that were familiar Cursillo themes. Instead we heard topics like the Person, Friendship, Love, Normality, Conviction etc. And we asked ourselves, what does this have to do with Cursillo? But as the days went on and we shared in the discussion groups, we began to see something.

When we returned to Canada we went almost immediately to our annual conference for Cursillistas from across the country. We gave the Conference a theme, "New Beginnings, Rediscovering the Vision". We asked the leaders to forget all that they knew or thought they knew about Cursillo, just for a few days, and to listen. And we shared with them what we had heard and lived in Mallorca. We told them that we had discovered something more about the Movement that we all love, that there was far more to it than we had dreamed of, and we invited them to come on a journey of discovery with us, as together we would spend the next years, discovering the truth of the Foundational Charism.

Since then, at each of our annual conferences, we have based the theme on one or more of those ten topics from the I Conversations. In doing so we have discovered, that they have everything to do with Cursillo, they are inherent in every aspect of the Movement and if we come to understand them and live them as we should, we will understand and live all that is Cursillo, for these ten topics are inherent in

the Gospel. The Good News is all about the Person, Friendship, Love, Normality, Conviction etc.

Some of the topics at first seem to be so simple and so familiar that it seems redundant to think about them but we asked ourselves: Why did Eduardo and the Mallorcan leaders find them to be so important? The whole purpose of the Conversations was to do just that, converse about the fact that the Charism was being lost and to find ways together to reclaim it. These are not new topics, Eduardo has always thought about them and held them as the very essence of all that is Cursillo. In discovering the depth of their meaning we are led deeper into understanding the mentality, the method and the purpose, but more important, we are led deeper into the Gospel for that is what we have discovered they reveal.

We have discovered that Cursillo is about living in friendship, with ourselves, with Christ, with our brothers and sisters, and we have discovered that this happens when we make the three essential encounters on a daily basis, for this is ongoing and continual conversion. What God wants for His people is that they should be happy in this life, living our faith in the market place of the everyday, being persons, not trying to be something we are not created to be. He has made us what we are, persons, and the best we can do for God is to be the best of what we are.

The uniqueness of Cursillo is that it is for the world, and it is lay people who live in the world, this is not where the priests live, in that sense. The Far Away from God need people to whom they can relate, people who are witnesses to something that is attractive and simple and which appears possible for them to also live. Once we have their attention, once they have taken the bait so to speak, then we can speak to them of Christ and then they will become interested in following Him. Once they have decided that, then the Church becomes real for them and we cannot see how this excludes any priest. The way we see it, and the way our priests see it is, we have distinct roles, each one needing the other.

We have talked here of unity. We too wanted unity of understanding in the Canadian Cursillo Movement and for us, the only way to unity was to seek the Truth and for us, the only place to look for the Truth was at the source, and that source is Eduardo Bonnín. Eduardo has never imposed his beliefs or been dogmatic about what we should be doing or thinking, or asking us to change. He is always the gentleman and always patient, and always ready to explain over and over and over again when we have not

understood. But one thing he is, he is always ready to answer when we finally have the wisdom to ask the question and to LISTEN. We didn't come to him trying to impress him with our own great knowledge and understanding, although we thought for a while that we had it. We came seeking the Truth and that is always what we receive.

Many religious orders come to the point where they realize they are losing sight of their original Charism and usually the response is to go back to their origins, to seek the thinking of their Founder. Most of the time the Founder is long since dead and they are left to find their answers in written archives. How fortunate we are in the Cursillo Movement, our Founder is with us, and he is more than capable of answering any question about the beginnings, as we have all heard these past days.

Since our first visit here to Mallorca we have returned many, many times and always we return home with our heads and hearts full. As someone said, "Eduardo you speak for 3 minutes and we think for 3 weeks".

In the beginning the Holy Spirit inspired Eduardo Bonnín with an idea, and in very simple terms, that idea was to find a way to allow each person to come to understand that God loves him or her. He was further inspired to develop a method of friendship to accomplish this, rudimentary at first, but complete in its essence. Later, it was discerned that the Cursillo Movement had its own Charism, which as we understand it, is a gift of God, given to a person, not for themselves but for the building up of the body of Christ. We in North America would not understand the concept that the elements of the Foundational Charism now need to be discerned by a committee, the Charism is what it is and has always been.

Although I have found it difficult to be here with no knowledge of the language that you use, in a way this has been a blessing for us. We have spent much time in translating the documents and writings of Eduardo. It is one thing to translate words, it is quite another to translate ideas and because of this, we have had to think and think and reflect and ask questions before we found just the right words to express the ideas. It has compelled us to study far more than we would have done if we could simply read the words as they are written.

Recently the United States has come to the same conclusions that Canada did in 1992 and as part of the NA/CG they too are beginning a study of the Conversations of Cala Figuera as the essence of the Foundational Charism. *Cont. on page 24*

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

- ◆ ATLANTIC, Antigonish (Tri-Counties, Cape Breton East, Cape Breton West) Halifax, St. John's, Charlottetown, Yarmouth, Yarmouth Valley. St. John
- ◆ QUEBEC, Montreal English, Spanish, Hungarian, Korean
- ◆ ONTARIO, Sarnia, London, Kent County/Chatham, Peterborough, Toronto, Hamilton, Timmins, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Korean, Latin American
- ◆ WESTERN, Victoria, Vancouver, Nelson, Prince George, Calgary, Edmonton, Grouard-McLennan, Kamloops, Native Cursillo, Winnipeg.

ATLANTIC

Cape Breton East

Greetings from the Cape Breton East Cursillo. It was a very successful year. We had six Cursillos, four women's and two men's, with approximately thirty candidates on each weekend. There were two group reunion gatherings, one in the spring and one in the fall. This gave the new Cursillistas an experience of group reunion and the opportunity to form new groups or join an existing group. This gathering is primarily held for new Cursillistas but any Cursillistas may attend.

We have two Ultreyas each month: One in Cape Breton County and one in Richmond County.

There were two retreats for Cursillistas, one in January and one in February at Villa Madonna Retreat Centre. Many Cursillistas are active in working Challenge weekends. They have six a year. The annual picnic in August is co-hosted by Challenge and Cursillo.

We publish our newsletter, "Fourth Day Light", twice a year.

This past year we celebrated our 25th anniversary in November.[2002] There were some Cursillistas from the very first weekend present. We came together to thank God for all His blessings as we continue to "Reach Out Like Christ". During this year we also initiated a fifth day Remembrance Mass to be held each November to celebrate the lives of our brothers and sisters who are enjoying their fifth day.

As I conclude my term as lay director, I thank God for all the wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ with whom I have come in contact. My prayer is that "He may give you (us) the power through His Spirit for your (our) hidden self to grow strong so that Christ may live in your (our) heart through faith (Eph. 3:16-18)

Decolores, Patsy MacNeil

Halifax

The Halifax Diocese Cursillo Movement has been quite busy this year. Before we had our September monthly Secretariat meeting, I had asked each member of Secretariat to pray and think about what our plans, goals and dreams should be for the coming year and to bring this in writing at our September meeting.

Out of these dreams and goals, the following has been accomplished and/or are in the process of being accomplished:

- 1) We celebrated a Memorial Mass in November, where we read the names of our deceased members who have entered into their Fifth Day.

building bridges from coast to coast



- 2) Also in November, we sponsored a concert by Gospel Award Winners, 4/4 The Lord (from Cape Breton) and this was quite successful and certainly a wonderful afternoon. [Ronnie Martin who has played at many of our annual conferences is a member of this group]
- 3) We had one set of weekends in March and welcomed 42 new cursillistas: 22 women and 20 men.
- 4) Our Secretariat took part in a retreat/workshop on job descriptions of Secretariat, team formation and weekend schedules. We plan to have a second workshop in June to finalize this work. We also are in the process of building a database which will include the names of all our cursillistas and will enable us to obtain many reports, i.e. a list of all cursillistas who worked as detail, kitchen captain, etc.
- 5) We continue to hold Ultreyas the last Wednesdays of each month at St. Lawrence Parish hall in Halifax. These are fairly well attended. We are blessed to hear quality and vibrant witness talks at the Ultreyas.
- 6) Our School of Leaders is getting stronger although we still would like to see an increase in attendance. The cursillistas attending our meetings are committed to the Cursillo movement. Out of School of Leaders, a group was formed to see how to promote Group Reunion. After meeting in the fall, they gave Secretariat a report of their ideas and principles of Group Reunion. From their recommendations came a workshop on Group Reunion which was held two weeks after the Cursillo weekends, with over 60 cursillistas attending the workshop including quite a few of the new cursillistas. The comments from this workshop were very positive and we have decided that this will be an annual event.
- 7) We presently have 15 Group Reunions who meet on regular basis.

We have a number of Secretariat positions this year that we will be changing at the end of June.

Although there is still a lot we would like to accomplish, we feel we had a good year and that our work will be helpful to the Community in keeping our Movement in line with the ideals of the Founder of Cursillo.

Respectfully submitted by Marie LeRue, Lay Director

QUEBEC

Carlos Munoz, of the Hispanic Cursillo in Montreal has agreed to replace Barry Guihan for the remainder of Barry's term as an Officer to CCCC.

One of the first tasks addressed by Carlos has been to form a Regional School of Leaders to which members of each of the cultural Cursillo Groups in the Montreal area are invited. The first meeting of the School took place in October with thirteen people in attendance. Those who came were from the English, Hungarian, Spanish Cursillo Movements and two representatives from the Khanawake reserve were also present.

The first session gave an overview of the true history of the Cursillo Movement and touched on aspects of the Foundational Charism which will be presented at future meetings of the School which will meet monthly at the Resource Centre in Montreal.

The purpose of the Regional School is to provide the means where each of the Movements operating in Montreal can share and dialogue together on all aspects of the Movement, learning from each other and coming to a unity of understanding and purpose.

More information about the Regional School can be obtained from Carlos Munoz or Erika Romwalter.

ONTARIO

Kent Cursillo

We took great pleasure in Oct 2002 to celebrate our 25th anniversary of the Kent Movement. In Sept 1977 we held our 1st weekend with Fr. John Sherlock as a spiritual director. In Oct 2002 we were again blessed to have Bishop Sherlock celebrate the mass that kicked off our celebration. We had about 250 people attend including many of the Rectors of the men's and women's weekends.

Kent has held 1 weekend each year for men and 1 for women, being 2 weeks apart in early February. The location is the basement of Blessed Sacrament Parish

and is separated into 3 sections by large plastic tarps. The dining hall, the sleeping area and the discussion area. This is accomplished through plenty of communication and co-operation from all involved. Because of this we are able to charge only \$60 for the weekend!

This past year, we implemented a Palanca calendar starting Dec 1st and going thru the end of Feb. Our goal is to have on each day of the calendar, someone specific, praying for Sponsors and Candidates. We publish the calendar so that everyone knows who is praying on that day. The rest of us, pray for that person. It was a tremendous success.

In April, we hold a school of leaders that runs each week for 5 consecutive weeks with different topics such as, the roots of Cursillo, Grouping, Sponsorship.... it was well prepared and attended. This gives the current Rector, co-Rector and Cha Cha an opportunity to choose their team.

One other success, that I feel needs mention is a funeral mananita. When a Cursillista passes away, (at the request of the family) we will go to the funreral home for a prayer service. Our goal is to show the family (some who are Cursillistas, some are not) how much of a community that we are as well as a support for the grieving family. We have a 20 minute service that includes a pre-amble on who we are, some scripture, songs and of course we finish singing a modified mananita song. Praise God!

Our secretariat meetings are held the last Monday of the month with about 15-20 people attending. Not all are secretariat positions but all are encouraged to attend. We do not vote, but follow the shared wisdom model. All around the table have been given a piece of knowledge by the Holy Spirit and when all share this, we are able to decide our avenue to travel. It works great. We focus alot on prayer and meditations/grouping.

Our Ultreyas are held the 3rd Friday of each month and we rotate them around the area to a different parish each month. Well attended.

One area that we are looking to improve upon is grouping. We have no small group co-ordinator and as such lack in small group organization. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

We have a wonderful website
<http://geocities.com/heartland/pointe/4593>. Please check us out and sign our guest book.

Decolores!
 Chris Foster, Lay Director

Windsor

We are happy to hear that after several years of inactivity the Windsor Cursillo Movement is finding new life.

A first Ultreya was held and approximately 30 people were in attendance.

Joe Salvadore and his team are busy with this endeavour and we ask you to keep them in your prayers.

Thunder Bay

We had our annual Grand Ultreya in September and sixty-seven Cursillistas were present making it very successful. Bishop Fred Colli, as usual if he is in town, attended the Grand Ultreya and participated for the whole afternoon. We had a meatball and spaghetti lunch with salad and desert. Bishop Colli said a few words and then we shared in groups. Maurice Pelletier (who earlier this year suffered a stroke) performed a witness talk and Oliver Piccinin the commentary. Before Mass we did the Living Rosary. During Mass Bishop Colli Commissioned this years Secretariat (this was the first time this was experienced and had special meaning for those participating). These were some of the highlights. Some first time attendees said they will be back next year because of experience.

We have booked next year's Cursillo weekends for the first two weekends in June and our teams are being formed and soon will be writing their talks. The team members come from several towns and also from Winnipeg (who in the future are hoping to have there own weekends). The leaders, who will be able, will be trying to meet at least once a month starting no later than January. We will be holding the weekends at the University again. This is the third time and we hope to continue there as it is a nice location and has separate sleeping quarters for everyone. The meals are eaten in another building, a five minute walk away. Meals are mostly prepared and brought to the Diocesan Centre where they are served by Cursillistas.

Leaders' School continues monthly and we are using the book "How to Program a School of Leaders" by using the schedule in the back of the book. Ultreyas continue on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Smaller groups also meet during the week.

Sp. Director
 Ass't Sp Director
 Lay Director

Rev. Mr. Howard McEachern
 Rev. Mr. Dennis McDermott
 Stephen Scalzo

Secretary	Mary McLean
Treasurer	John Trevisanutto
Pre-Cursillo Chairperson	Marilyn Huber
Three Day Chairperson	Elaine Piccinin
Fourth Day Chairperson	Fran Stokaluk
Newsletter Editor	Don Tribe

Only Howard, Dennis and Elaine are returning from the previous year Secretariat. Steve, Fran, John, Marilyn are on new positions with Don and Mary new to the secretariat.

For your information we are presently looking at opening up a website and will keep you informed.

Steve Scalzo
Lay Director
Diocese of Thunder Bay Cursillo

WESTERN

Victoria

This year has been inspired and blessed. Our Cursillo community has held three, spirit filled weekends, and we have had many opportunities to come together and support each other on our journey with Christ. Here are some of the highlights.

We refer to our Secretariat as the Regional Working Group. This group is made up from Cursillistas who express an interest at the September Ultreya, in coordinating and advancing the movement. This year's Working Group and our respective responsibilities are:

Marlene Goley - Lay Director
Doreen Keizer - Ultreya Facilitator
Cynthia Watkins - Post-Cursillo Formation
Don Callow - Island Colours Newsletter
Men's Weekend Rector (Spring 2003)
John Vukovic - Cursillista Contact List
John Oetter - CCCC Representative
David Boyer WCCC Regional Representative
Mark Underhill - Treasurer
Valin Marshall - Men's Weekend Rector (Fall 2002)
Joanne Rada - Women's Weekend Rector (Spring 2003)
Marcia Thompson

Our endeavours to support and expand the movement over this past year have included: Ultreyas are held on the first Tuesday of each month. This year, we have included a short meditation into

the regular Ultreya format which has been a well received prayerful, reflective opportunity.

The CCCC National Conference in Ottawa (Evangelization Through Conversion: We are the Good News), June 20-23, was attended by John Oetter who came back inspired about the suggested changes to the third day rollos.

The Second Annual Summer Picnic for Cursillistas and their families was held on July 21.

The Fourth Annual Cursillo Community Mass and Potluck Dinner was held on August 16.

The WCC Conference in Grande Prairie (Centred in Christ), September 27-29, was attended by John Oetter, David Boyer and Marlene Goley.

The Cursillo community sponsored two Non-violent Communication workshops based on the work of Marshall Rosenberg. The workshops were conducted by Selinde Krayenhoff and held November 6 and March 29,

The 5th Day Remembrance was incorporated into our November Ultreya.

As part of this annual remembrance, we have a Fifth Day Book in which we record the names of our 5th day Cursillistas, the date they made their Cursillos, and the date of their 5th Day.

Three editions of our Island Colours Newsletter were published.

A new brochure and poster was created.

Women's Weekend

Our Women's Weekend was held May 22-25.

Men's Weekends

We had two men's weekends this year. Our Men's Weekend scheduled for April 18-21 was postponed to October 24-27, and we had a second successful weekend May 16-19.

We have welcomed 35 new Cursillistas into our community as a result of this year's weekends. Our expanded community was evident at the June Ultreya. We typically have between 30 and 40 people attend each month, but in June there were 60!

We still continue to face the challenges of distance and geography in supporting the movement outside of the greater Victoria area on the Island. Several enthusiastic members of our community have moved up island recently so we will endeavour to build on these opportunities in the upcoming year.

We look forward to our continued journey onward as we rejoice in the Lord always.

De colores,
Marlene Goley

Vancouver

These are exciting times for our movement here in Canada. For several years there has been an interest and desire to recapture the original vision of our founder Eduardo Bonnín. Our National Officers Group has done much over the years to meet with Eduardo and other Mallorcan leaders in order to understand what that vision is and how we here in Canada could live that out. They have done a wonderful job sharing what they've learned with all those who have participated in the past several years' worth of National Conferences.

Here in Vancouver, several of our members have faithfully attended many of the Conferences and have diligently taken up the challenge to bring the vision back home with them. Although we haven't had an active Leaders School for quite some time, this hasn't stopped the message from being passed along to the rest of our active Cursillo community; it has been shared and spread throughout our local movement in Team meetings, Ultreyas, the Fourth Day Newsletter, and one on one discussions. I think that for most people who heard the message and embraced it, the biggest challenge was always trying to reconcile these ideas that we were hearing about with the rollo outlines we were using to prepare for the Cursillo weekends. This Summer, though, there was finally a momentous event....the Resource Centre had new outline booklets available for us to use. The outlines in the booklets are a translation of the original outlines as used in Mallorca - the fruit of countless hours of work on the part of a small group of Cursillistas here in Canada who worked with the leaders in Mallorca to make the vision a reality for the English-speaking Cursillo movements.

This past Summer the team from the Ladies Weekend used these outlines to prepare their rollos - the first team in all of Canada to do so. The reviews were somewhat mixed, some people felt the new outlines were easier to use, some thought they were more difficult as they're much shorter, and some thought the translation wasn't the best. One thing that did shine through, though, is that the rollos prepared from these outlines were AWESOME! The message of each rollo came through loud and clear. What made these rollos so different? There is much more room for personal witness in these rollos - the method of giving a rollo has been restored to the original intent of appealing to the candidates hearts with personal sharing and witness, rather than cramming their heads full of knowledge. The result is a much more powerful way of getting across the simple message of the Cursillo movement - the Good News that God loves you.

Our local movement also hosted the WCCC Annual Conference on the August long weekend. There were about 55 Cursillistas, literally from across the country, who came to participate and 'Go Deeper' into their understanding of our movement. The material used for the Conference was taken from the 'Structure of Ideas' book that was written by Eduardo Bonnín, Francisco Forteza, and Bernardo Vadell. The rollos were based on a series of rollos that were developed and intended to be presented to new Cursillistas, the ones who were really keen, about a month after their weekend. The Conference was very aptly named 'Go Deeper' as we really had no idea how deep we would be challenged to go in preparing the outlines and the rollos themselves.

The seven rollos took us on a journey from the weekend experience to a far deeper understanding of what it means to live and walk as a Christian and as a Cursillista in today's world. After hearing a recap of the weekend messages, each of the subsequent rollos challenged us to look deeper within ourselves to know and understand what stands in our way of being everything that God wants us to be. They were very inspiring messages that evoked a lot of good discussion at the tables.

It wasn't all work, though. We had a wonderful Ultreya on the Friday night and I think that everyone there came away very inspired after hearing Marguerite share a bit of her journey with us and how God has been changing her and challenging her to grow as she works with the Agape Street Ministry. Saturday night was Fiesta time, and each group was assigned to come up with a skit or a song that captured the message of the rollos heard so far. All I can say is that, as a movement, we are blessed with some incredibly talented people who are extremely resourceful. I don't think there was a dry eye in the house by the time it was over...we all laughed so hard that tears were running down our faces.

All in all it was a very good summer for our movement and this fall is shaping up to be the same....we have both Men's and Women's weekends happening in October, as well as Leaders School starting up in October, plus there's a Fourth Day workshop scheduled for November....and these are all in addition to our regular Ultreyas that take place throughout the Vancouver area every Friday night. Lots of opportunities to understand more about yourself and our movement!

De Colores!
Jennifer Segers



Jesters' Corner

.....No Sad Saints Here!!

There is the story of a pastor who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage.

The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humor, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign...

*"Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass.
Caution: Do not step in exhaust."*

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?" A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the kindergarten boy. "Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked. You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven... "

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him in front of the service station. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump. "Reverend," said the young man, "sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip." The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business."

People want the front of the bus, the back of the church, and the center of attention.

A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter.

Then he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES." When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note. "I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!" His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you 'know' what the Bible means?" The son replied, "I do know!" "Okay, said his father. "So, son, what does the Bible mean?" "That's easy, Daddy. It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth'"

Sunday after church a Mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt." Needless to say, the Mom was perplexed. Later in the day, the pastor stopped by for tea and the Mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said "Be not afraid, thy comforter is coming."

There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk. "Only the Ten Commandments." answered the lady.

You don't stop laughing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop laughing!!!!

ESSAY

“ESSAY” is a column, that provides a vehicle in which the talks and reflections from Cursillo leaders around the country (and abroad) can be shared with the larger audience. Hopefully these ‘essays’ will provide the basis for further discussion. If anyone cares to respond, please feel free to send your commentary to Fully Alive. While these essays are subject to editing for space, clarity and subject, they do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the CCCC.

The following is the presentation given by Sheelagh Winston at the 2003 Conference.

THE THREE ENCOUNTERS

Introduction

The Cursillo is a means to finding a practical solution to all of life’s problems. Its effectiveness is linked to Grace, to the technique, and the enthusiasm, devotion and spirit of love with which one lives it.

The method of the Movement is the result of long and prayerful study and discernment on how to reach the goal of having the candidates live the fourth day, through an effective use of the three days. The Cursillo Movement didn’t just happen, it was very carefully thought out using not only the Truths of our faith but also the fruit of the study of sociology and psychology. In his presentation at the World Encounter in Korea in 1992, Eduardo Bonnin said: “The Cursillo Movement was not born as an answer from the Church to the world but as one way to communicate to man that God loves him.”

Its success is directly related to three things, an understanding of what it is to live in Grace, the way in which the leaders understand and carry out their role, and the participation of the candidates on the weekend.

The candidates are encouraged to come to the realization that to live in Grace, is the key to their happiness and the success of the Cursillo. To live in Grace, in the thinking of the Founder, is to know Jesus as a friend, alive within us, to come to know Him as He really is and this leads to a deep desire to follow Him.

Our task as leaders

As leaders in the Movement our primary task, is not to build and maintain structures, simply for the sake of having a Movement. Our primary task is twofold. First it is to do all that we can to make the Three Encounters possible. The Three Encounters, and that is what this talk will examine. And second, to then stand back and let God’s Grace work in the candidates.

If the leaders on the weekend are successful, the candidates will come to their own decisions about wanting to live in Grace and will realize for themselves, in their own time, what they need to do in order to be in Grace. They will want to ‘clean their house’ without being made to feel coerced or pressured. An analogy that the Mallorcans use for this is: if the windows of your house are dirty, you cannot see the beauty of the world outside clearly.

To bring the candidates to this place the weekend provides the opportunity to make the Three essential Encounters. Somehow, there seems to be little mention of the Three Encounters in a direct way in the literature and yet they really are the whole purpose of the Movement.

Once a candidate has encountered themselves, Christ and the others, our job as leaders is to support them on their journey. It is not our role to guide them into anything. Not our favourite apostolic activities, organizations or piety but simply to support and encourage them.

Where do the three encounters lead?

As we live our piety, study, and action, we make the three encounters over and over, with ourselves and with Jesus and with those who share our lives. We find the Christ who is alive within us, we find Him as He is through His Word and in His Church and we find Him in each other, we live in Grace and we find joy in the midst of everything.

“To achieve and feel this joy I have had to discover God, who was hidden in all the basic things of my life, in all those seemingly unimportant things, But when I awoken and become aware again of the origin of everything I discover that life has meaning and I accept the partnership with the eternal. Thanks be to God.” Jesus Valls, II Conversations of Cala Figuera.

The first encounter—The encounter with self, the place where we befriend ourselves.

Very early, Eduardo discovered that all of life is a pilgrimage back to the Father and each one of us is on our own, personal pilgrimage. The most important encounter, the one that is so essential, is the encounter

with self and this is the theme of the First Day of the weekend. How essential that first Encounter is to conversion, but it is important to realize that conversion is not a change, it is rather a process which will continue every day until we are finally home with our Father. The important point is that the process will not begin and therefore cannot continue, until we encounter ourselves. Until we come face to face with who we are, and this is the meeting that takes place on the Cursillo weekend, where, provided the opportunity, we come to see ourselves with the tenderness and compassion of God and it is really a foretaste of what is to come. We see the wrinkles and the warts, we acknowledge them and own them as our own, but instead of guilt and anguish, even horror, over the garbage that we all carry around within us, it is as if the gentle light of God's love puts everything into perspective and we see ourselves as He sees us. When we think of our own children as they come in from play, covered in mud, dirty and dishevelled, all we see is a dirty little kid but one whom we know, underneath, is that glowing little thing that we love to death as they come freshly scrubbed from the tub. We know them, we love them, no matter what.

So often we secretly see ourselves as worthless and in truth we don't like ourselves and as a result we go one of two ways. We either spend our lives trying to prove to the world that we are not ugly and flawed, or else we sink into despair and wallow in the mire of our worthlessness. God sees us, not in the winter of the despair we sometimes feel, but in our springtime, in the promise of all that we are to become. We are everything with Him, and nothing without Him. This journey inward is where God leads us in our prayer, this is our piety, this is where our relationship with Him grows and this is where we come to know ourselves as loved unconditionally, where we come to love ourselves, and this is where the process of our conversion continues. It is here that we come to know ourselves as we are known and are able to befriend ourselves as we learn to accept ourselves as friends of Jesus.

Sometimes we slip and fail and we go back to that place where we are so disgusted with ourselves that we think "God cannot possibly love me, look at what I have done". Or perhaps someone we love betrays us, hurts us, or we betray them, and we resort to justifying our actions or reacting in anger. There is another lesson to learn, another step along the path leading us home. When we have blown it, we know, we get a feeling of dis-ease, of disquiet and often we try to turn away from what is causing our discomfort. But when we are sincere about growing, we know that we cannot, we must turn and face it and often

this is what a candidate will bring to the weekend, this need to look inside and the fear of doing so. In their lives perhaps they have been running for years, filling the days with activities and pursuits, sometimes these are even apostolic activities, but in the end, they can only fail to bring the happiness we all seek. In the first hours of the Cursillo, we are led to look at ourselves, and, if the leaders know what their role is, the process begins. We help them to discover that place that is inside each of us, the sacred place where God waits, where we can go, meet Him again, talk to Him, listen to Him and let Him love us back into life. As Eduardo says: "*Christ lives in each person through Grace, and His presence is manifested in a way that is appealing and attractive. We recall the words: "The Kingdom of God is within you". Let us seek Him where He says He is, in the interior of every person, that is where we will find Him. The Cursillo has always promoted this message and tries to follow the principle that each person will find self-acceptance in coming to know themselves as they really are, as God knows them, with their own potential and limitations, understanding that they can always be better, and realizing that the path they must take will be a joy, if taken in the company of friends.*"

This first Encounter with self is often a painful journey that we would rather avoid, it is often much easier and more pleasant to encounter Christ and to find friendship with other people.

It is in the journey into self, that we gradually understand who we are and who we are to Him. Without it we run the risk of becoming so removed from reality that we are unbalanced, we focus solely on God and forget others, or focus on others and forget God. God Himself unveils for us the masterpiece that He has created and in the journey into self we encounter Him the most profoundly, we come to know ourselves as a person and as such we come to the realization of who we really are.

The second encounter—The encounter with Christ

One of the topics at the I Conversations was Life and in the context of Cursillo, this also means Grace. In his talk on this topic Father Antonio Perez Ramos said, "*The Cursillos, above all, bring about a strong reaction that melts the layer of ice that covers the heart. It removes the scales from the eyes. Opens both ears.. Shows men their condition as rational beings and the importance of their being children of God. Light streams in. Grace enters the soul forcefully. Love massages and causes the heart to swell. That is when the encounter with Christ takes place. A new world opens up before the eyes. The presence of Jesus gives a different significance and a new value to all things . . . It is an encounter that constitutes a true revelation.*"

In the encounter with Christ, the Cursillo is wrapped in the Grace that He earned for us. And the Cursillo settles itself into the nucleus of Christianity, in the Word of God made flesh: Who came so that we might have Life and Life in abundance (John, 10:10).

In a word, the candidates meet Jesus perhaps for the first time as a friend, as the Person that He really is, not what we have learned of Him and not the historical figure that is all that some believe of Him. The whole purpose of the second Encounter, is to enable us to know Jesus as close to us, alive and living within us. If I have learned nothing else from my contact with the Mallorcan Cursillistas, it is that they truly believe this and what is more, they live as if they believe it. I have seen it with my own eyes and have seen the joy in theirs. In the planning for this Conference I have reached out many times to those whom I know believe this and who turn to Jesus as quickly and as confidently as if they just had breakfast with Him. And they have been there for me and taken me to Him in their prayer without any need of explanations and I have felt His presence and His comfort. This is our whole purpose for Cursillo weekends, Ultreyas or Group Reunions, to help those who come across our paths to share in this gift that we have found. The awesome knowledge that we are not alone, He is there with us every step of the way as He leads us home. If we don't know this for ourselves, then we have nothing to share. Our happiness rests in friendship with Jesus and this is the purpose of the second day, to allow the candidates the time and the space for the second Encounter to take place. For this to happen, again, we as Leaders have to know what we are about and to stand back and let Grace flow in. We only facilitate it, we don't do it. As one young Cursillista in Mallorca said to me, "When you have met Jesus you cannot help but love Him and loving Him, we want to follow Him, we cannot help ourselves". Just think what that sure conviction does, especially in the life of someone as young as she is. No matter where, no matter what, He is there and what is most important, through the second Encounter we come to know it with deep conviction.

The third encounter – The encounter with others

The third encounter for some of us is very difficult, especially if we are independent loner types. However, on the Cursillo weekend it happens quite easily for both team and candidates, it's like we're in a different mode. The spirit is tangibly present and each one of us responds to that presence and the candidates see the possibilities by what they experience. But as we move into the 4th Day, the journey really begins in earnest and it is then that we

must answer the question, "After the weekend, - what?" Was the message that we gave genuinely a message that can now be witnessed in the evidence of how we live our everyday lives or do we go back to our old way of being...that was then, this is now, I have things to do and places to go, this is my real world. The third encounter, begun on the third day of the weekend, is the journey outward, the journey towards other people and it is here that we encounter Jesus present in His people.

This encounter is where the kind of friendship that we speak about in Cursillo begins to grow and flourish, in the Group Reunions and Ultreyas and this kind of friendship has nothing to do with feelings, it has to do with befriending and allowing ourselves to be befriended by those whom God sends to journey with us. It is only in relating to and interacting with others, that we come into contact with the reality of our humanity for we see ourselves, all our gift, all our faults, reflected back to us from our friends. Friendship develops and grows in that space that exists between us as individuals, it forms the bridges and links us together. And in the process it very often causes us great pain and discomfort, but also great joy. In order for the encounter with others to take place, we have to allow them to come into our lives and we do this by sharing ourselves with them, in varying degrees. Sharing creates the bond, but it takes great courage to actually cross the bridge to the other side, for it is much easier and far safer to keep up the walls and to stare at each other across the chasm that separates us, each of us yearning for something that we cannot quite identify. What we yearn for and reach out for is understanding and acceptance, for compassion and love, for something inside of us instinctively knows that God dwells in the other and we know without knowing, that in coming into contact with the heart of the other person, each of us is touched by God and each of us becomes a little more whole, a little closer to being fully human, a little closer to home.

The truth is that we need each other, we are uniquely individual, and loved by God in that way, but He has made us a people, a community of believers whom He has created to live together and it is through each other that we experience His love in thousands of small ways. When we speak of friendship being the means by which we reach out to people, it means simply to be willing to journey, even if only for a very short while, with the person who comes across our path and to whom we reach out in friendship, giving them a glimpse of God's love. We never know how those brief encounters can change lives forever. We only have to look at the Jesus of the Gospels to know that almost all His encounters with people were brief,

the woman at the well, the paralytic and the blind man. But for that moment in time, they knew His friendship and through it they were touched by God and their lives would never be the same again, as He sent them on their way to seek out truth for themselves. And this is the method of evangelization in Cursillo, to be so convinced of the Truth of God's love that the only thing we can do is to give it away.

In 1996 the Annual National Cursillo Conference had as its theme, "The Glory of God is a Person Fully Alive" and through the presentations and discussions we explored together just what that means and how it comes about. As Christians we all want to give glory to God, but to reflect on the concept of the Glory of God being a fully alive person was for many of us, a different way of looking at things. But that is exactly what the Cursillo attempts to do, to share the Good News that each person is loved by God, that God wants His people to be happy in this life, that He has created us as human beings with feelings, desires, appetites; with the capacity to experience sorrow and joy. It is in being human that we reach our potential and the more human we become, the more Christian we will be. God has created us as He wishes us to be, but unfortunately, for so long we misunderstood and thought we had to deny our humanity and become something else, angels or mystics, or else lock ourselves away behind walls of self denial and rigidity. (Again we can take our kids as examples. Would we really be happy to see our children docile and timid, obeying every rule we could dream up, or does it give us joy to see them running free, laughing and happy as they discover life and the world that God has made for their delight? It might be less harrowing for us, but would it really make us happy to see them so solemn and so afraid?) I am sure that that is what God wants for each one of us, to enjoy the life He has given us, and to share that joy for life with those we journey with.

We can experience God within ourselves but it is only in the company of each other that we can become fully human and therefore fully alive. This is very simple, but as we hear so many times, it is very far from easy. This no longer involves just me, or me and God,

this involves other people and let's face it, I might not like them, or God forbid, they may not like me. This part of the journey is where it often gets very rough and as Cursillo leaders, decisions need to be made that take us beyond feelings and egos, it is where we start to get serious.

The way in which we approach those who have yet to hear the Good News is the exact opposite to the way in which we ourselves need to proceed and this was explored last year in the Study of the Environment talk. Very often those we meet live with closed hearts because of the circumstances of their lives. In this situation we need to win first their heart, before we can ever begin to try to reach their mind, and eventually their will, and the only way to do this is to treat them with the dignity and respect that it is their right simply because they are a person. Accepting them just as they are. Sometimes when we meet the prodigals, they are in the pigsty, and we need to go into the pigsty with them in order to show them where the gate is. In dealing with ourselves however, it is quite the reverse. We very often don't want to do

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Hosted by
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Please put this important date on your Cursillo calendar of events for 2004.

Come as a Group Reunion or an Ultreya group and meet your fellow Cursillistas from across the country.

Theme to be announced in the next issue of Fully Alive.

what we know we are called to, and are very good at rationalizing our way out. But if we are serious about the journey, this is where we must engage our wills and this also means using our knees. If we pray for the courage and strength to do what we know in our minds we are called to do, once we act in accordance with what we know to be true, then our hearts will follow. No-one said this would be easy, but it is the only way.

This is what we are called to as a Movement, to have those around us say of us, "See How They Love One Another". But as we all know, this doesn't just happen, it takes work and commitment and a desire to have everyone reach the end of the journey. We cannot leave people behind, no matter how big a pain we think they are, for if we do they will either go back where they came from or else get lost completely. Every time we lose a member of the community, the community is depleted, there is a void, an ache that will not be ignored.

For many of us, especially in the early stages, it is as if we see the world after Cursillo through rose coloured glasses. Our world has not changed, but we have, and we assume that because this is Cursillo and everyone has experienced what we have, our lives on the journey together will now grow and flourish and be wonderful forever after. It is excruciatingly painful, when suddenly, our Utopia appears to disappear and it often happens very rapidly. This phenomena needs to be understood and we can rest assured that it probably was exactly the same for the first Christians. We can also know, that the road ahead may get pretty rough. What has happened is that we have been living a dream, it's like the honeymoon stage of Cursillo. But most of us know, that honeymoons come to an end and life goes on at kitchen sinks, behind desks and computer terminals, struggling each day to live as family, fighting the traffic, or dealing with people in the real world. This is where we all come face to face with our humanity in all its flawed wonder. Personalities come to the forefront, ideas surface that clash with those of others, egos raise their ugly little heads and prejudice threatens to overwhelm reason and we enter a period of terrible disillusionment. We wonder if this thing called Cursillo is worth our energy and sometimes heartache.

When this happens, between friends, between groups, in Ultreyas, in the Schools, in whole Movements or wherever, choices have to be made and decisions taken. The question we must ask ourselves is, are we committed to the journey or do we want to go home and recapture the dream because it is more comfortable than what we are facing. If we are

committed as individuals and as communities we now face a difficult trek across what might appear to be a desert, where nothing seems to bring relief, there are hurdles and barriers to navigate and the goal seems to have disappeared behind insurmountable mountains. This is where the analogy of pilgrimage is so strong. I'm sure many a pilgrim has laid on the hard ground at night and thought about a soft bed at home, but true pilgrims are willing to face the hardships they encounter, they keep their eyes on the goal and they forge ahead. We are no different. We have a goal, we are committed to reaching it and are willing to make the sacrifices that the way ahead demands. Although we travel together, the journey we each make is individual. We are in sight of each other, but the journey is personal for I cannot reach the goal, on your back or without putting one foot in front of the other each day.

What we must understand is that this journey is not really about Cursillo, it is our own personal journey home to be with God and Cursillo is simply the method, the way, by which we have chosen to travel. The journey we make together is one of support, we are simply companions helping each other along the way. The Cursillo Movement is not about turning everyone into a Cursillista, it is about helping each one to become all that God intends them to be, giving Glory to God as Fully Alive people. When the Cursillo Movement really reaches its goal, it will be the instrument of its own demise.

The pilgrims on the way to Compostela encouraged each other with the word 'Ultreya', which we know means "Onward". But it also means 'until we meet again', 'be seeing you'. If we keep the reality of a pilgrimage in mind, and how the pilgrims shared the experiences of the day's journey with each other as they stopped to rest each evening, the whole concept of the Ultreya and its purpose becomes clearer. It is where each one shares what the other has lived and it is where the work of building the community takes place, where the friendships are developed and nurtured, where each one comes for the sheer joy of being with friends who share a common goal, a common vision of life. This is where genuine friendship takes root. It is certainly not about structure and program, it is simply an oasis along the path, where we as pilgrims find rest and refreshment and encouragement to set forth again on the next step in the journey. When I come to the Ultreya, I need to be able to find friends who are interested in where my journey has led me, what I have experienced of God and a place where others share their own experiences and where I can learn from them.

Sometimes, often times, I feel abandoned, as if I have nowhere to turn, I want a shoulder to cry on, a pair of arms around me. But I am learning, just what friendship means in my life and it is so important that we understand Friendship from the perspective of the Foundational Charism that it too was a topic at the I Conversations.

I always liked to think that I didn't need anybody, that I could handle anything that life sent my way with an attitude of "Give it your best shot, see if I care". I have had to learn about friendship in Cursillo, what it is and what it isn't.

It is unconditional love and support, but it isn't unquestioning endorsement of everything that I do or say. God knows, I'm very often wrong.

A true friend, desires only that you reach all the potential that they see in you, that you sometimes don't see yourself or that you are not using, and very often this requires a swift kick in the pants, another of those pinches from a loving Father who is using the love of a friend to get your attention. We need to have and be the kind of friend that takes Jesus as its model, one who loves and cares enough to tell us the truth.

If as individuals and as communities we are willing to make the journey across what might appear to be a desert of disillusionment, what was once a dream becomes the reality and we begin to live as friends and then we can really get down to the business of changing the world, for what we are proposing is now authentic. For how can we hope to share the Good News, that God loves each and every one of us when we act as if we ourselves are not sure that it is true. The method of Cursillo prescribes that we evangelize others by the witness of our own conversion. They have to see it being lived in order to want it for themselves.

So once we have committed ourselves to the journey, where do we start?

As we have said, much, much work has been done trying to understand the Foundational Charism of the Cursillo, and what is becoming ever more apparent is that its whole essence is simply finding a way to live the Gospel truths in our everyday lives and how to make the Good News attractive to the ordinary person who comes across our path. We don't have to be theologians, we just have to be real. We have to live what we say we are. In Fully Alive there was an answer to a question about our role as Evangelizers. "Are we not called to 'preach' the Good News?" The answer was quite simply, "No, we are called to become the Good News". Then we need to be able to

give voice to our actions, to explain our beliefs. In scripture we read the words: "Don't worry about what you will say, for on that day, God's spirit will speak in your heart".

Bonnin has said that the Cursillo is not meant to satisfy the hunger for God, it is meant to create a hunger for Him. It is not meant to answer questions, it is more designed to provoke questions, the kind of questions that will send each one of us on our own journey of discovery, to go deeper and deeper into all that is Cursillo, not in order to be a better Cursillista but to be better and better Christians for that is all the Founder envisioned since the very beginning.

The beauty of this Movement is that God sends us companions to journey with us, people whose paths would never have crossed ours had it not been for Cursillo, and yet they become so important to our journey that we wonder how we would make it without them.

I recently went back home to Vernon to attend the funeral of a very dear friend. She was a candidate on the table when I worked my very first weekend back in 1976. Over the years we remained the kind of friends who are always comfortable with each other and who can always share, although we no longer saw each other very often.

Joan had gone from her weekend and had put into practice what she had heard. She was a busy mother with five growing children and was also a business-woman. At her Cursillo she made her encounter with self and found within herself all her beauty, all her goodness, but also she shared with us those things that she found needed to be changed and with God's help, she set about changing them. She encountered Jesus everyday and her friendship with Him could be seen in the peace and tranquility that she brought to every activity that she was involved in. And she encountered others on a daily basis. She and her husband ran the Christian bookstore and so she had many opportunities to reach out to people who wandered in, looking for something without knowing what they were looking for but sensing the welcome that they would find. She treated each of them with dignity and respect and sometimes spoke to them of Jesus in her quiet and non-threatening way. At Ultreya one day she announced that she had sought out other store owners who were Christian or at least interested and they had begun to meet on a regular basis to pray for a change in the environment at the mall and to support each other in the small ways in which each of them felt they could have an impact. She had formed a Group Reunion in the mall and she could say that they were beginning to notice a change.

She brought her peace and her joy to her family and when they were grown and gone, and she had retired, she and her husband began to go further afield to encounter others. They spent their vacation times working in missions in third world countries, bringing not many words of great wisdom but love and friendship and the joy that was her gift. It was on one of these excursions abroad that her car went off a mountain road in Peru and she was killed.

“The Group Reunion facilitates and simplifies the continuation of the three encounters that the Cursillo has initiated and brought about: with ourselves, with Christ and with our brothers and sisters.”

E. Bonnin

As I walked into the Church I saw her daughters, smiling and peaceful. As they each spoke in turn about their mother, their faces were lit with the joy of knowing that hers was a life that had been well lived and their love and pride in her overcame their sorrow. And I heard that they knew that what had sustained Joan over the years was what she had brought from her Cursillo weekend, where she had encountered herself, had encountered her Lord and had befriended and allowed herself to be befriended by Him and had taken the fruit of those two encounters into the world as she opened her heart and her life in encountering others. The girls said, “our mother did not do big things, but all the small things she did, she did them beautifully and well”.

Cursillo in Vernon has been dead for many years but Joan had stayed in her Group Reunion since 1976 until she died. I have been talking to the Vernon Cursillistas about Cursillo and the possibility of reviving the Movement and I had the opportunity to talk to them about the Vision of Eduardo Bonnin, the Foundational Charism and what I have experienced in Mallorca.

At the funeral, one of the old Cursillistas turned to me and said, “Sheelagh, this is exactly what you have been talking about isn’t it, Joan lived what you have been saying, this is wonderful, we want this in Vernon”. You see, for Joan, life had been a perennial

Cursillo and I have never before been so aware of the communion of saints as I have been in the days since her funeral. I am convinced that Joan has been doing Palanca for us as she walks with the friend who walked with her in life, and I have never been so convinced of the meaning and importance of the Three Encounters, which essentially, are what the Three Days are all about.

So, where do the three encounters lead?

The journey onward is really just beginning, but though the way ahead may be difficult, let’s all take heart from the fact that our feet are on the path, we have each other and as the pilgrims on the way to Compostela were guided by the stars shining in the Milky Way, we too have the guiding light of the Gospel and the support and encouragement of Cursillo Leaders who are committed to making the original vision for the Movement a reality and too, our Founder, Eduardo Bonnin who says:

“The Group Reunion facilitates and simplifies the continuation of the three encounters that the Cursillo has initiated and brought about: with ourselves, with Christ and with our brothers and sisters.

Not only not forgetting, but highlighting and emphasizing that, of the three encounters, the one with self is the most important since it constitutes the indispensable structure that enables the other two to occur. The encounter with oneself is the axis, the pivot and the support of the whole Cursillo Movement. Moreover, whoever understands the Movement well, knows that there is a greater distance between the surface of a man to his innermost being, than there is from the surface of a man to the moon.

The main objective which the Group Reunion pursues and achieves, is to stir the Spirit into action in order to travel inwards with the optimism and joy which creates the closest friendship. When using those same means in adequate and specific measure, we move from sharing one’s convictions to then sharing the intimate details of everyday life.”

This really, is what we are all about as leaders, to help those whom God sends to us, to discover themselves, their God, and to help them find Him in those who share their lives so that they in turn can go into the world being the disciples to all nations that He has asked us to be. Not expending all our energy on building a Movement, but giving our lives to build the Kingdom. If not us, Who, If not now, When?

Christ is Counting on Us.

De Colores



Manna

Teachings From Our

Catholic Heritage

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ADVENT... WAITING AND PREPARING!

Christmas is coming!!! We'd have to be living on the planet Mars not to notice that as Halloween ends the stores start preparing for Christmas. It wasn't always so. Christmas decorating and carols used to be kept until about two weeks before Christmas, but when World War I broke out, the stores started to stock gift items in November; so that families would have enough time to send gifts to the boys fighting in Europe. When the war ended, merchant practices returned to the usual pattern. However, it all began again with World War II, but this time the merchants were considerably savvier. Realizing that the bulk of their retail sales occurred at Christmas, they adopted the practice of proclaiming Christmas immediately after American Thanksgiving, when people were still in a jolly and expansive frame of mind. Many merchants were not Christians, and while good for business, Christmas was hardly a time for those of other faiths to celebrate. This is where the practice of "X"ing out "Christ" in *Christmas* began. It became "*Merry Xmas*." The commercialization of the season has, in a sense, become a sort of counterfeit Advent.

But what is the real meaning of Advent? I hope that the previous Manna bulletins we have helped us realize that our Church has developed in her awareness of her relatedness in and through Christ. We have seen how the central focus of our faith, the Eucharist, developed and how we can actually trace our growth through the centuries of liturgical worship.

In the first centuries every Sunday celebrated the Risen Lord and was a major feast day, but as the Church began efforts at uniting ALL the local congregations, it became necessary to fix the date of

Easter. The early Church saw the fifty days of the Easter season as one big Sunday!

The Eastern Church celebrated *Theophany* or what we call *Epiphany* for three weeks before the feast day on Jan. 6th. In 337A.D. (just six months before the death of the Emperor Constantine) the Western Church at Rome established the birth date of Jesus as December 25, thereby "christianizing" the pagan festival of Saturnalia.

Advent, which celebrates the coming of the Lord, was six weeks long in the first 5th - 6th centuries, but by the 7th century a five-week period began to appear, during which time men were ordained to the priesthood. This season of Advent has been the beginning of the Church's liturgical year since the 10th century. We commonly associate Advent and the coming of the Lord as the day of Jesus' birth, but Advent also looks beyond the Incarnation (when God became Man) to the Second Coming of Jesus in the final days. We are encouraged to make Advent a season of reflection and preparation, which is why the Church consequently offers all of us this time as an opportunity to be reconciled and pardoned (Confession).

In Advent, we "Wait and Prepare." Unfortunately, waiting with its passive connotations has given way to an emphasis on preparation as we all become stamped with our culture and get swept into the frenzy of "shop till you drop," but the dictates of consumerism can be off-set in our families, (the "domestic church") by cultivating moments of prayer. One way to do this is by displaying an Advent Wreath and lighting consecutive candles as a countdown to Christmas Day.

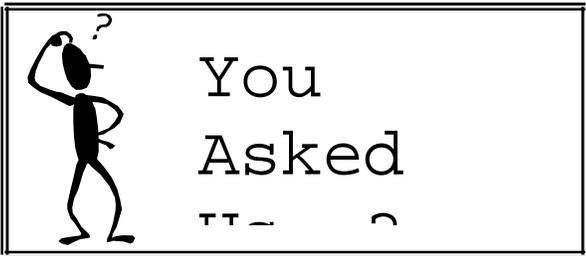
In ancient days the end of the year with its dark nights and dark mornings terrified an uncomprehending people. Unable to make sense of the world they inhabited mankind searched for ways to alleviate their fears. To them the life-giving sunlight had disappeared, no one knew why... or where it had gone. One ritual they performed to persuade the sun to return was to take a wheel,

symbol of harvesting and fertility, and set fire to it in the hopes that the sun would recognize their plight and return once more to bring life to their world.

The ADVENT WREATH is based on this ancient symbol of hope. The ring of evergreens tells us that our life is without end, eternal. We burn purple candles for the first two weeks. Purple is the colour of royalty and the Church uses this colour as a sign of penitence. On the third Sunday (what used to be called "Gaudete" Sunday) we burn a pink candle, a little relief in a somber season. The fourth candle, also purple, heralds the imminent end of Advent and the birth of the Son of God. On Christmas Eve the central white candle, the "Christ candle" is lit. Now the wreath is ablaze with light, just as the wagon wheel of ancient days was ablaze. For them it

signified a desperate plea for light to once again enter their world; for us it is a sign that the promise is fulfilled. The Son has come.

In some homes, family prayer is a new experience and like all things new is approached somewhat shyly. Having an Advent wreath and raising a few prayers can very simply ease the awkwardness. Most churches have packets of Advent candles often accompanied by a leaflet of appropriate prayers. Children and "crafty" people can have fun making a wreath and for those unfortunates (like me!) who have two left hands, dollar stores sell them ready to be decorated with cedar from the garden. Have a peace filled Advent. Try not to send any X-mas cards this year. Let's put Christ back into Christmas!



Q. Are the presentations given at the annual Conference critiqued as they are for a Cursillo Weekend? It seems that some of them at this Conference were not.

The Officers recognize and agree that for the presentations at Conferences to 'dovetail' with each other and to accurately speak to the theme, it is most important that they be critiqued and discussed. Although this is the ideal, given that the Officers cannot meet as frequently as teams do while preparing for weekends, every effort is made to have the presentations prepared and shared for commentary and feed-back, usually via email. This year, more than in recent years, this was done with almost all the presentations. The exception would be the meditations as normally, a meditation is just that and does not need to be critiqued in the same manner,

In light of the reaction to the meditations at the Saint John Conference, in future, the meditations will also be part of the critiquing process.

Q. Has any thought been given to moving the Conference back to the end of September, as in

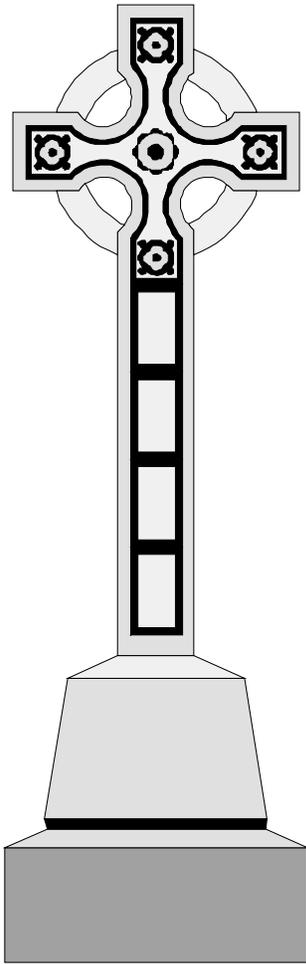
previous years. June is too hot....surely If you plan two years in advance a facility could be found so that we can hold the Conference at the end of September.

This has been the subject of much debate. As the Officers try to meet the needs of all those who would like to attend a Conference, it is necessary to find accommodations that are suitable for all age groups and physical ability.

Four of the last five Conferences that were held at the end of September used camp facilities which, while for many were perfectly fine and a good choice, for a significant number they were entirely too rustic in that half of the attendees were required to sleep in upper bunks or on the floor. Many found this very difficult and for some it was quite a hardship.

By holding the Conference in June, the possible facilities available become much more numerous as colleges and schools can be used. Also, when people travel and pay air fare, they have expressed to the Officers that they much prefer to be comfortable, even if it is more costly. Many are now incorporating the Conference into a vacation time.

Many priests told us that September is an impossible time for them as all the programs are just beginning. At this Conference we were told that the end of June is impossible because all the programs are just ending. Others suggested that the June date interferes with graduation time. This is also true but very few of us have children graduating every year. Unfortunately, there is no perfect time that would suit everyone and so we do the best we can to accommodate as many as possible.



MATTERS SPIRITUAL

LIFE

The following is the conclusion of the presentation on Life, one of the Ten Topics of the 1 Conversations of Cala Figuera. Given by Father Antonio Perez Ramos Continued from Volume 6 Issue 1&2 Number 45/46

The Lived Experience of what is Fundamental for being a Christian.

The Spanish word for this is Vivencia and is another of those words that is not adequately translated by use of a single word. In the context of Cursillo, the closest we can come to its true meaning is to understand that it doesn't just mean knowing about something and being able to intellectualize it, it means precisely, to actually understand and to express it through the living of it. Something akin to loving, we cannot understand its depth until we actually feel loved and are able to love.

7. According to Father Haring, a lived experience does not consist of cold and conceptual thoughts that attempt to capture the characteristics and essential relationship while at the same time maintaining a certain distance. The Lived experience doesn't in any way exclude thoughts but they are the thoughts that come from the heart. They are a person's vibrant response according to his values.

And Cardinal Danielou said: *"Being Christian is essentially a form of life, not fundamentally a philosophy. Being Christian is living the Divine life, to possess Grace in our soul and to enjoy familiarity with God. And this is an absolute novelty. Through Grace, life acquires a new dimension"*.

The reason that Cursillo speaks of lived experience, is not psychological - although neither does it exclude it but rather gives it decisive importance - but is the lived experience of the Spiritual life, with our spirit in union with the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 8, 14-17).

That is why the Cursillo has always been presented as lived experience; attempting through personal experience to make living the Gospel a reality, the personal encounter with an alive Christ, in which the response to love as personal and committed is a requirement and where prayer becomes a personal dialogue with a friend.

Cursillo is essentially to bring Christianity to life, to live the greatness of the fullness of Grace as a personal experience, conscious and growing, received in freedom, from the generosity of God, transmitted through the marvellous communion of the Mystical Body, where the action of the holy Spirit is implored through the Palanca of prayer and sacrifice.

8.. Life in Grace and the Apostolate.

Then the action of God through Grace in each participant, becomes by itself like an apostolic action, according to Saint John Chrisostom: *"It's easier for the sun to stop shining and being hot than for Christianity to stop being a torch. And the Torch of the Christian cannot be hidden"*.

Indeed, the whole history and the whole of Cursillo literature are a unique testimony that confirms that the essence of Cursillo is the Apostolate. Cursillo says that life in Grace, which becomes by consequence, the apostolate, it is the essence of Christianity and therefore the essence of our Movement. The Cursillista who grasps the Rollo on Sanctifying Grace well understanding it as the jubilant proclamation of

God's Love, while also gaining from it the desire to communicate that love to everyone, thereby opening them to be seduced and invaded by the Lord, demonstrates that they have understood and become fully aware that Grace, is being Christian. Furthermore, in understanding this, they are then compelled to proclaim, in the same way as the Samaritan woman who discovered the good in her life, as Life itself, or like Mary Magdalene, who felt the uncontrollable desire to announce to her brothers that she had seen the resurrected Christ, glorious, alive, and close, or the disciples on the road to Emmaus, who jumped for joy after being surprised by their contact with somebody who spoke to their hearts and made them understand that Christ is definitely salvation, and the only Hope.

It is this person who has discovered faith, love, happiness, and Hope, in a privileged place during a time of Grace - or Kairos - during the Cursillo, having been brought to this specific time and place by providence, by the affection and warmth between the brothers or sisters, and by being close to the light of the Blessed Sacrament, the participants can do no less than communicate what it was that had such an impact. Everywhere, Grace is expansive, contagious, creative, building hope; more than light, fire, and air. Because Grace is God, who offers himself, immense, creator, and the very ground of our existence.

And this person has understood the gift of God, that we have been chosen without merit, and have been since all eternity, through the initiative of the One who loved us first? (1 John, 1, 10) Those who have been filled with the core of what is fundamental for being a Christian, of what the condition of Grace means, with its gratuity and beauty, its interiority and permanency; discovering what gives meaning to life; cannot then fail to be a spokesperson for the great reality and the most memorable event in life. "To those who received"- says St. John - "they were made Children of God" (John 1, 12)". "And by his fullness we all received" (John 1, 16).

And the awareness of that greatness and responsibility, is what make us happy and joyful, and what impels us to announce with enthusiasm and generosity what was so freely announced to us: Christ is alive, and loves us, and he has saved us.

And we not only feel compelled to transmit by word of mouth from one person to another, but also to irradiate the Gospel in the environments that we frequent and share.

In direct proportion to the measure of his or her interior warmth, the individual Cursillista, or the

group, will find their own Jerusalem, driven by the Charity of Christ (2 Cor 5, 14) and they will try to be faithful witnesses of the message received in the last meditation of the Cursillo.

9.. Cursillos and the Vitality of the Ecclesial Structures

Vitality, in accordance with the dictionary, means the quality of having life, as well the activity and effectiveness of the vital faculties.

It is the old question about the Cursillo as an apostolic instrument or function, and its missionary aspect.

Was it created or born from the heart of Catholic Action, or, by autonomy or self-sufficiency from the Church and other organized Apostolic Groups, particularly from the parishes? It seems that the question is still not resolved.

We become focused only through being affected by the nuclear element of Grace. Then, Grace, is experienced as the primary value, as the supreme ideal, with energy and enthusiasm, shown initially as a determined and able force to send the Cursillistas out to win over their brothers and sisters, environments and society. That promptly helped the Cursillo Movement to become known as an instrument of Christian Renewal.

However, as was remarked upon in 1981, in the Manifesto where it stated, "*the Cursillos of Christianity, a reality not yet accomplished*". "*There is an unquestionable fact that during the Cursillo Movement's History, there have always existed two ways to understand it and by consequence, also two ways to channel it and guide it towards its purpose.*"

*Some believe that it is only to give vitality to the already existing structures and organizations, leaving the original in place, but with a better spirit; and others who believe that if the Movement is given the space to live its basic and minimum structure of Group Reunion, Ultreya, and School, with the same dynamism, it can bring the Good news of the Gospel to all the hidden places of human existence, personal, family, and social."*¹

The specific purpose of the Cursillo Movement is to make it possible for everybody to live what is Fundamental for being a Christian. To achieve the reality of the liberty of the person encountering the Holy Spirit. This will surpass any structure and will strike down any temptation to enclose and classify something that it is so natural and spontaneous as the Individual Encounter with the Gospel of Christ.

¹ Cursillos in Christianity Manifesto E. Bonnin, F. Forteza

10.. Grace and New Evangelization.

John Paul II remarked on May 9 of 1988, that one of the qualities of the New Evangelization is that it has a new ardour. In this, - without doubt - there is a point of connection with the work of Cursillo, in which Grace is the desire for holiness that is prompted by the radical union with Christ, the only one Who has the Word of eternal life (Jn 6,69), who is the Bread of life, coming down from Heaven to give life to the World (Jn 6, 58-61).

Something profound, which I insist upon, is the truth of Man himself, as was revealed to us, that everyone has been created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1, 27), and has been called to participate in the divine life and to realize the plan of Salvation (1 Tim 2, 4 GS, 22). Something that is amazing, is when theology teaches that the divine nature, in One who is the Word, is united with human nature; then, human nature could possibly cohabit and be radically united to divinity.

To evangelize the world with power is a truth of our doctrinal, ecclesial and Cursillo heritage. And to evangelize with out preference for any kind of people - Cursillo has never been partisan to the differences between the social classes - because Cursillo is aware that every person has one and the same Father: God (Mt 23,9). And when a person, meets another person, they should accept and love them as a brother.

Cursillo has been evangelizing for fifty years, with love and from a very evident solidarity with the Mystical Body of Christ, conscious that all should be in solidarity, - another beautiful name for charity - which is a Christian virtue that covers all dimension of gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation (GS 24).

We know, also, from the point of view of Grace, that our neighbour is made in the image of the Father, saved by Christ, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and to know that even in the most insignificant, Christ is also present (Mt. 25, 40 & 45); also that we have to offer help and offer ourselves, because above all, we all receive from the fullness of Christ, the love that corresponds to his love (1 Jn 3, 16).

Terutliano said, that the Christian is another Christ, and we say in the Rollo on Habitual Grace, as an echo, that man is a sacrament of Christ, in the same way that Christ is a Sacrament of the Father. Also, a Christian, aware of that greatness, of that vocation and mission of Sanctity, is able to renew humanity, to incarnate the Gospel, Christianizing the whole world, in, with, and through Christ.

11.. Meaning in life is the trademark of Christ

This concept appears very clearly in the Gospel. Jesus is himself, his own person, who becomes the guiding light in the life of the disciples. They accept His invitation to follow him, to leave everything and go after him (Mt. 4,20).

Then the mission involves a double aspect; trust in Jesus, in his work, in his personal power; and the aspect of identification with Him, with his love, life, and his mission. It means, to cooperate in life with him, to join your fortune to His, to join his existence, his meaning, his activity, his future, with yours. Then life conforms to Him, takes its meaning from Him, identifies with Him.

What is important, - Joaquin Herrera says - is the meaning that I give to what happens to me. This sense of the meaning for what happens, is able to transform us with new attitudes in the work of making us a new person. The human being is an ongoing work. Nobody is complete and everybody is undergoing that work. In Christ and by his Grace, by baptism, and the action of the Holy Spirit we have been made a new creature, a new person, we have been saved by Christ, and we have been resurrected from death to the life, because of Him, and as Paul says, we have to look for the things of Christ, and try to taste, in our hidden life in God in this life what our future with God will be, what eternal life will be, what is going to help us rise above, what will help us to improve ourselves, until Jesus Christ, our life, comes again. Then we will be resurrected together with Him in Glory (Col 3, 1-4).

12.. Plan for life

I will allow myself, in summary, to repeat a wonderful and inspired prayer of Paul VI, in April 1955, entitled: **"You, Christ are Life"**,

You, Christ are the light,
 You, Christ are love,
 You, Christ are truth,
 Who gives true meaning to life,
 True value, true purpose, Who straightens our life.
 You who teaches us why we live,
 why we suffer, why we die.
 You who guides our thoughts, and our will in the
 right paths.
 You who gives our behaviour
 And our ways of interpreting our existence,
 The most authentic, vast, and super-natural form.
 You are the only one able to give the means, the power,
 And the capacity to be a good person,
 Of having character, to sacrifice ourselves for
 something, for what is worthwhile.
 You are the one who discovers the secret of life"

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Continued from page 5

This is good news for us in North America, for now we have found unity of criterion and we will go forward together.

Someone once asked me, what book I had read that had taught me the most about the Foundational Charism. My answer to that is, no book, what I have learned of the Foundational Charism is what I have seen lived here in Mallorca. What I have seen is not people on their best behaviour because a visitor is in their midst, what I have seen is people who live what they say they believe and who personify what it is to be a Cursillista, they have allowed me to live it with them as friends. Most of all what I have learned is that to live as a Cursillista is to live my baptism and therefore to live the call of the Church, what more is there to live?

Thankyou,
De Colores
(Sheelagh Winston)



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