

Fully Alive



THE NATIONAL RESOURCE DOCUMENT OF THE CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC CURSILLOS



A new picture of Eduardo Bonnin painted by Stefano Pichi, Genoa, Italy

"Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.

Pope Paul VI Evangelization in the Modern World, 1975

This witness of a Christian who is gradually accepting his past, grateful for his present and believing in the future, is therefore, substantially a witness of joy and a witness of friendship. Joy is the most personal feature of the person, the characteristic which most characterizes him, the genuine expression of his most radical originality.

Since Joy is communicative, it facilitates, enables, and expresses communication. Joy expands itself and, upon being captured by someone, it prompts its captor to question himself about what is giving him joy.

Eduardo Bonnin, Opening speech to the IV Inter-American Meeting of National Leaders of the Cursillo Movement, Caracas, Venezuela, 1976

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OFFICERS' CORNER

Linda Pitkanen, Chair of CCCC

God is good! Today is the first day of Spring, and His grace is boundless. As I sit here at my computer, looking out into the front yard, I can almost hear the birds sing! There is a clean and warm breeze in the air; the sky is a vivid shade of blue with fluffy white clouds, and I am full of joy. Our winter season is behind us, and we can start to look forward to warmer weather, flowers poking their heads out of the ground and the bare trees beginning to bud, a renewal of hope and joy. That is what Christ has done for us as well. When He died on the cross for us, he gave us a chance to start afresh, a renewal of sorts. How blessed are we!

I experienced my first taste of Spring last week when I flew to Halifax. I spent two days in Halifax with some wonderful Cursillistas; their hospitality was amazing. We discussed the upcoming C of C, and the following day we toured the venue, Mount St. Vincent University. It is a beautiful place, and everything at the site is in close proximity to each other. Keep in mind that it is called "Mount" for a reason. The morning we went there, it was raining lightly, and the water was flowing down the road at a swift pace. Halifax was glorious in its efforts to tidy up the last remnants of snow with its refreshing morning rain.

I am looking forward to returning there at the end of June for the C of C. I can't wait to see old friends and make some new friends. I am looking forward to meeting with our friends, the three amigos, and sharing them with all who will be attending! These men will provide rollos and answer any questions concerning the

Cursillo Charism as given to Eduardo Bonnin and lived in Mallorca to this day. We are so very blessed that these gentlemen from Mallorca are willing and able to share their knowledge of Cursillo with us.

This C of C will be the third Cursillo of Cursillo that I will have attended. I find that I learn different things from each one of them. I think that this is because I have grown so much more in between the years and hear something (said at a prior C of C, but that flew right past me) that now resonates deeply inside of me.

From Tuesday to Thursday of the week I was in the East, our Officers' Group met in P.E.I. at the Our Lady of Hope Retreat Centre. I was immediately astounded at how excellent this retreat centre is. I am used to well used furniture and musty smells in other retreat centres but not this one! It is brand new and smells like it is brand new. Three stories tall with well-appointed facilities. Our resource person, Sheelagh, was able to plug her computer into the big flat screen tv so that we all could see what was on her screen.

The administrators are Cursillistas and went all out to ensure that we had everything we needed for our meeting. Marty even went into town to purchase us an adaptor to plug in the HDMI cable to Sheelagh's computer. The chapel is a beautiful and peaceful place to celebrate Mass, and the queen-sized beds, so delightful to sleep in after a full day of meetings. Be careful as you might gain weight while there, the food was plentiful and delicious. I told Marty and Earla that I thought if they rated retreat centres, this one would have a 5-star rating.

We decided at this OG meeting that this year we will continue to implement the Step By Step Rector’s Guide, and also concentrate on creating a compact package on the comprehension of writing, formatting, and mentoring of a rollo.

Speaking of rollos, Sheelagh has been working hard with Mallorca and the US to finalize the last of the rollos to be updated. They will be made available to all the Canadian movements once the final formatting and proofing is complete.

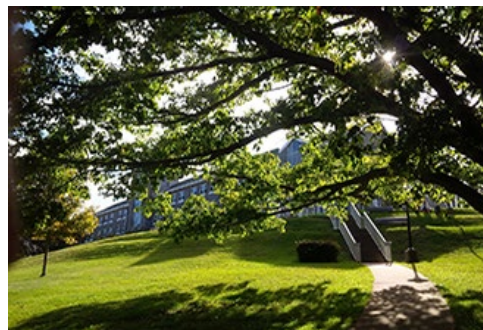
We have implemented a new way of supplying some of the books sold through the Resource Centre which has made the process simpler. If you wish to order Pilgrim’s Guides, Fourth Day books, Group Reunion and Service Sheets or the 2018 Conference booklets, please send an email to the Resource Centre. The order will be sent to the Staples hub nearest to you and you will be able to pick them up at the Staples store. When ordering, please indicate the quantity and the address of the Staples that is most convenient for you to pick up. You will be advised when the order is ready and our treasurer, Muriel Brideau will invoice you which you will then be able to pay via e-transfer.

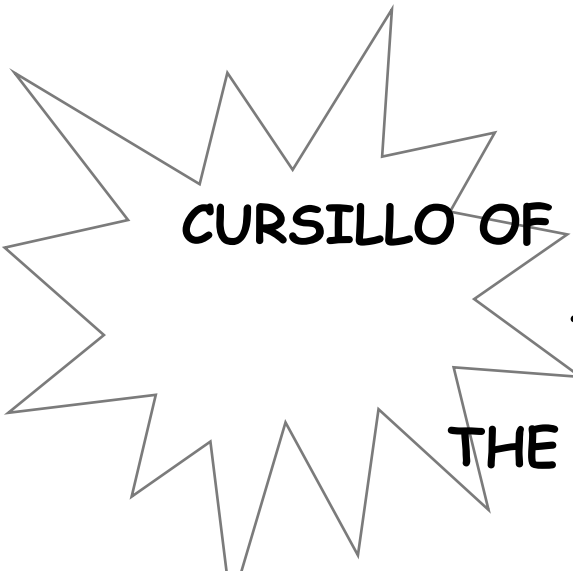
I am delighted to tell you that Kingston, Ontario, is holding its second set of weekends, the men’s in March and the

women’s later in the summer. We are extremely grateful to the generosity of the Toronto Cursillo Movement who are giving of their time and talent once again to ensure that the weekends are authentic and well prepared. Some Cursillistas from Kingston will form part of the team while the Rector on the men’s weekend is Kevin O’Brien from Toronto and the women’s, Diane Coates, also from Toronto. Kingston had been in hibernation for over 30 years, which made resurrecting it a wonderful opportunity to implement the Step by Step Rector’s Guide in its entirety. Such a blessing to be able to begin again with the Rector’s Guide authored by Eduardo Bonnin himself.

So, in conclusion, I would like to invite every one of you to come to Halifax from June 27 until June 30th for the C of C. It will be worth every penny of the \$295 registration fee. The chance to speak to Miguel, Juan, and Manuel is well worth it. These three amigos do corridor work at each break and try to talk personally to everyone present there for the weekend. The hospitality that I have always heard about the Atlantic is indeed genuine. I experienced it myself this past week and would like for all of you to experience it too.

De Colores,
Linda Pitkanen





**CURSILLO OF CURSILLOS IS COMING
TO
THE ATLANTIC**

On behalf of CCCC
The Cursillistas of the Atlantic will be
hosting a
Cursillo of Cursillos
at
Mount St. Vincent University,
Halifax, NS
June 27th - 30th 2019

The three Amigos from Mallorca, Miguel Sureda, Juan Aumatell and Manuel Fernandez, will once again facilitate the event, sharing their love and knowledge of Cursillo, learned through their relationship with Eduardo and living the Cursillo with him.

The Cursillo of Cursillos was created by Eduardo Bonnin and he recommended that a diocese hold one every four years.

The C of C looks deeply at the Charism of Cursillo and the mentality and method which that charism engendered. The format is the same as a Cursillo weekend comprising rollos, sharing in the table groups and much fun and laughter.

More information and registration will be made available in the coming months. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this event which we are blessed to be able to provide.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT
**"A friend is someone
 with whom you can
 think out loud."**

*This is the first part of a three-part document excerpted from a presentation entitled *The Theology, Psychology and Pedagogy of Cursillo*, given by Fr. David Smith, at the US National Encounter 2018, Seattle, WA. The remaining two parts will appear in the next two issues of *Fully Alive*.*

PEDAGOGY

The title assigned for this talk is "The Theology, Psychology and Pedagogy of Cursillo". Approximately 150 Cursillistas in the United States participated in the World Ultreya on May 6, 2017 at Fatima, Portugal. The theme of the Ultreya was, "E Hora Dos Cursillos" ("It is the Hour of Cursillo"). The logo incorporated three figures representing "Christ", "Person", and "Friendship". By way of the three fundamental human encounters, through the means of community, solidarity, and friendship, the outcome is a world becoming more human, and, thus, more divine, where we can be "at times" with God, others, and ourselves.

Based on this, the Fall Region 7 Encounter at Macon, Georgia took as its theme "Now is the time for Cursillo". For these reasons, which I hope to make more evident in this talk, I would like to substitute it with "Cursillo-Now More Than Ever".

Many of us are now eligible for Social Security, were schooled in the question and answer format of the Baltimore Catechism. (Bear in mind that inclusive language was not yet a concern.)

Question #3: What is man?

"Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and made in the image and likeness of God"

Thus, we are, by our very nature, relational beings.

Question 6: "Why did God make you?"

"God made me to know him, to love him, and to serve him in this world and to be happy with him in heaven".

The THEOLOGY of the Movement will flesh these out. (To be published in issue 82 of *Fully Alive*)

Given the centrality of the person in Cursillo, we begin with the rollo of Eduardo that generated the mentality, the method and the movement - "Study of the Environment". Environment is herein defined as "the person and his/her circumstances, that is "the moveable square metre" in which each person's life unfolds at a given time and place.

The methodology is experimented and kerygmatic. We experience life in our circumstances and then seek to understand the experience of our interactions. The fundamental proclamation ("kerygma"), the best news that God loves me/us and that, in this love, he empowers us to come to our fullness as persons ("fully alive" according to St. Irenaeus) in the life of grace. Eduardo Bonnín always taught that, "the purpose of Cursillo is that every person live in grace". The focus is always on the PERSON, contrasting the Cursillo method with Marxist "messianic utopianism", Eduardo insisted was the reason why "Christ being a PERSON, not a structure (institution). He understood that Christ came to save, not "the world", but PERSONS in the world. It is thus, that the world is changed.

In accord with the traditional theological insight, that "GRACE BUILDS ON NATURE", the sequence of the "3 Days"

follows the pattern. Because of the primary, but not exclusive, focus of Cursillo directed to the "alejados" ("faraway"), these estranged from faith/religious practice or even for the "practicing" who have never experienced the Gospel as Good news, the meditations and rollos begin with the human and then proceed to "the divine". For example, the first meditation reflects on the individual's human situation, followed by the "Prodigal Son" which is God's response to the same situation. The same sequence, human to divine, continues with "Ideal" and "Habitual Grace", the latter in the fulfillment of the aspirations of the former. This dialogue between the human and divine continues as the day and spiritual advisors rollos are interspersed.

Defining the person as a "being for love", Cursillo understands that the human person flourishes by means of the "3 Encounters", (with oneself, with God and with others). In God's grace, the person becomes even more fully alive through friendship. All of the "structures" of Cursillo, "Pre-Cursillo", "3 Days", "Post-Cursillo", "Schools of Leaders", Secretariat have a primary purpose - to enable each person to live friendships in each of the 3 Encounters, "Group Reunion" and "Ultreya" make it possible for us to live day-by-day in friendships.

In Group Reunion and Ultreya, we spur each other on in Piety, Study, and Action. "Piety" facilitates our living in friendship with God through Jesus Christ. "Study" enables us to grow in knowledge of ourselves, God, and others, so that we can befriend ourselves, and be friends with God and others. "Action" is the process of making friends, being friends, and bringing friends to Christ; we become infectious bearing the fruits of friendships.

To be continued.

Prayer for the 2019 Canadian Cursillo of Cursillos

As Eduardo told us, "*Cursillo is like a great cathedral whose foundations are buried so that they cannot be seen but are what supports the magnificent building. The foundations of Cursillo are the prayers and sacrifices of many, like those of the cathedral, quietly hidden but supporting the great gift that is Cursillo*".

Loving Father, we thank You and praise You for the unfailing knowledge of Your love for every one of Your sons and daughters, and for the mission entrusted to us to bring the Good News of Your love to all we meet through the gift of Cursillo. We ask You for a fresh outpouring of Your Holy Spirit on those who will gather in Your name in Halifax from June 27th to 30th that all will have hearts ready to receive, ears ready to hear, and that those who are entrusted with sharing their experience of the charism of Cursillo will be gifted with the words that will help with the journey from head to heart.

We entrust this Cursillo of Cursillos to You, Lord, and ask that everything that is not of You be silenced and removed from this gathering of pilgrims.

We bring all of this to You through Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Eduardo Bonnin, intercede for us.

St. Paul, patron of Cursillo, pray for us.

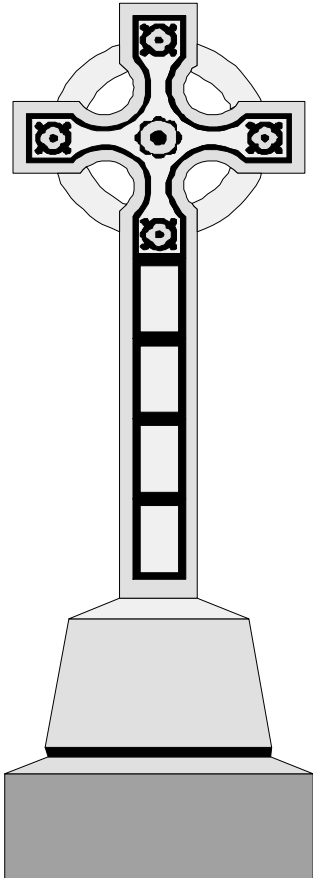
Please forward palanca to
cofchalfax2019@gmail.com

Father Francesco Pirisi, FoH, St Theresa's parish, Halifax, NS

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26.4 -10

Second Reading: First Letter of Paul to the Romans 10.8-13

Gospel: Luke 4.1-13



MATTERS SPIRITUAL

My brothers and sisters, we gather all together around the altar of the Lord. We come here in front of our Father to give Him thanks for the mystery of our salvation and for each and every gift that every day we receive from His goodness. We are grateful tonight for the first week of Lent, the first big step in our journey, our journey of conversion, of penance that will help us to be well prepared to celebrate Easter.

And as I mentioned last week, you see how beautiful our Church is, with no decorations, just bare and it is wonderful as it is. [Last week the altar area was decorated with beautiful arrangements of flowers.] So, I look forward to celebrating Easter when there will be lilies and flowers, and everything will be beautiful again!

So, as I was saying before, our Church is beautiful! It is so beautiful, and I have to correct myself because I didn't use the proper words. It is not that when the Church is bare that it is not beautiful and that when there are flowers it is beautiful. What I meant is that when there are flowers it is beautiful and colourful and when it's bare it is beautiful as it is because it is a wonder of architecture and I love, as I said last week, to see the difference because the way that we decorate, the way that we live, the sacred space where we meet, we gather together to worship God, well it says to us, to our heart what our faith is about. And now it is not colourful, but still beautiful. It is austere! Very austere!

All this marble, the stones and the marble under the altar is telling us something special, strong, maybe a little bit cold. But it's good because this journey of Lent is reminding us that we need to be strong. And then when we will celebrate Easter there will be lilies everywhere, flowers and colours everywhere. They will represent our joy of the resurrection and of life coming back on Earth because of spring. This is how I see it and I hope that all together we love and appreciate the beauty of this Church, this building. It is true that the Church is the community but the community gathers in a place and praise be to God, it happens that our community gathers together in this masterpiece of art and

architecture. So we need to be grateful for this. I am! I'm sure that all of us are.

Let me say something about today's Liturgy because it's very important and it sets the tone of our journey in Lent. What is the Scripture talking about? Well, the Scripture is talking about the temptations of Jesus Christ in the desert, right after the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan, after God the Father gave witness to Him, saying, "This is my beloved Son. In you I am well pleased." The Holy Spirit brought Jesus into the desert. Jesus, "full of the Holy Spirit", says the Gospel, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, the wilderness or desert, same thing.

Why did the Spirit bring Jesus in the wilderness? If Jesus is the One that brought back to Earth friendship, reconciliation and communion with God, why is it that this is the first thing that He does? He's doing that for a very special reason because as God, He doesn't need to be tempted because He commands to the devil, but because He is fully human, He is bringing our own humanity into the wilderness, in the place of tests, in the place of poverty, in the place of hardship and in that place, Jesus Christ in His full humanity, He faced the devil and His temptation. And the good news is that Jesus Christ won in the desert! He defeated the devil.

He was there for 40 days. What does it mean forty days? Well, it is a time and we use this time still in the Church for the 40 days of Lent. It is also a symbol because we believe the account of the Gospel thinking that Jesus was for 40 days after the Baptism in the wilderness. It is also a symbol of one generation. A generation means a lifetime. I started to live when my generation started to live and when my generation will pass, I will pass. So 40 days is a symbol of one generation passing. This means that Jesus

Christ, He was tempted for His whole life. In these 40 days, in a special way but for His whole life he [the devil] was always with Him, and even more, we'll see how.

What kind of temptations came to Him? Well, the first one was to change stone into bread. The second one was to receive all the authority and the glory of the kingdoms of earth. And the third one was to jump from the pinnacle, from the Tower of the Temple of Jerusalem so that the angels can come and pick Him up so that He wouldn't crash on the ground.

These are three temptations, all of them associated with the devil, asking Jesus to worship him. What are these temptations about? They are called by some scholars, the "Messianic Temptations". The King Messiah will face these three temptations.

The first one, to change stones into bread and to feed the hungry and to make the Kingdom of Israel powerful because of lots of food and that was a basic requirement at the time in order to be powerful. The second temptation is to have glory and authority over all the kingdoms of the earth in a political way with an army, and the last temptation is to have God at the side of the King Messiah to show everybody that God is there ready to do miracles for the King Messiah.

These are the temptations that Jesus Christ is facing, and everybody keeps telling Him, "You are the King Messiah." which means they're telling Him, "You are the One that will change stone into bread. You're the One that will have authority over all the kingdoms of the earth. You are the One for whom God will realize wonders, will make miracles."

And for His whole life, Jesus pushed everything back. "I don't want this." Jesus not wanting power will be the trait of His

presence on earth. What Jesus wants to be the trait of His presence on earth is obedience to the Father. This is why He answers in the way He does. He's tempted, tempted constantly by power and constantly pushes it back because his real power is to fulfill the will of God the Father. And for us Christians it's the same because we follow His same footsteps.

The last line is also interesting, "The devil departed from Jesus until an opportune time." Ah, there is a little, a little different translation in Italian, "He left until that time." What time? If you go and read the Gospels, the four Gospels, you will find out that when Jesus is on the cross, He receives His Last Temptation because someone is saying to Him, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross and we will believe you!" That is always the devil tempting Jesus through the mouth of those who are beneath the cross. The devil said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread. If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from the tower. If you are the Son of God, the same one will be the last one and still Jesus Christ, He will refuse, preferring to be obedient to God the Father.

Now this is what the Gospel is telling us. Let's look a little bit inside of our own interior life. What is temptation about because this is the human experience and all of us, we are tempted in many different ways every day, every day of our lives? If you are waiting for the day the temptations will come to an end, well be patient, because when we are in heaven, we will have finished our journey. That is the day when temptations will finish, not before.

So where is temptation reaching us? How does it work? Because of original sin, we carry in our flesh, a weakness. We are able to hear the temptation of the devil. Our

flesh is weak. Our mind is weak. In that weakness, we are touched usually with a suggestion that can be a word, it can be an image, could be a memory, could be a feeling, could even be a smell. If I remember the smell of chips or I don't know, fish sticks, my mouth starts to water, and the temptation of gluttony gets me immediately. So you see how the suggestion of the temptation works.

Now imagine how many things have come to our minds; all of them, they are there to distract us with the desire of something pleasuring us or the fear of something that can be displeasing. So suggestions come, in many different ways, and if you are not careful, we'll start to dialogue about the suggestion.

After I smell the fish sticks, which I love with a little bit of lemon and salt, if I keep talking about it because along with lemon and salt, maybe [I will add] a little bit of salad on the side and some good bread, Italian bread, eh, and then maybe it can be toasted to make it even nicer and put some butter on it; besides the joke, you see how many words, you see how this image is growing. You see how smell becomes a flavour and how this flavour becomes the image of a banquet: that's the way it works.

And the more we engage, engage with this dialogue, the bigger it will become until the point that we will fill our mind and when our mind is full of that image, it will be very easy to fall and to go back home, go to the freezer, open it, get the box of the fish sticks and put them in the oven. It works always in the same way! Once we identify the dynamic, it's even boring because the devil never finds something new. It's always in the same way: he brings a suggestion, engages us in a dialogue and then finally we'll go do what he suggested us to do.

What is the sin in this, the last piece, when I decide to go downstairs and to open the freezer? That is the sin because freely, I go downstairs; freely, I open the freezer; freely, I take the box. Nobody's forcing me. There is no devil that pops up in a cloud of brimstone that is forcing my hand. My hand goes by itself to take the box of fish sticks. In that expression of freedom, is my sin.

And what is the goal of temptation? It is that I sin so that I can be separated from God. No worries. God doesn't care about me eating fish sticks, I hope. But there are many other things that I can be tempted with. And when I commit what is against His love and the love that He commanded me to have for my brothers and sisters, that is a sin and that sin will separate me from Him, from God.

At the point, I'm in need of God's mercy, because the devil accomplished his task. He has been smarter than me. Now, how do we overcome temptation? Well, there are lots of things that the Church gives us. The first one: discipline. We need to learn what to do with the first suggestion. When I hear or I see or I perceive this smell, what do I do with that? Well, the observance of Lent grants me to learn how to be free. Fasting, giving up the things that maybe I like very much or maybe to make an extra effort in helping people by giving a little alms to the poor; all these things they increase my freedom. It is like going to the gym and flexing the muscles after a while it becomes strong. Well this is not a good example, but that's okay, you know what I mean!

With this discipline we will learn, and we will achieve freedom so that when we have an image, when we have a temptation, we will just be able to ignore it, gently, very gently.

The second tool that the Church gives me for how to overcome temptation is to accept not a temptation but the test which means, to change what is happening from a negative experience to a positive one. How do I do that? What is positive with a temptation by which the devil wants me to commit a sin? Well, the point is that in temptation and test and trial, I get to know myself and I get to grow in humility as a human being and as a Christian. If I never put myself to the test, how do I grow? How do I become humble? How do I discover that I need God's help? To be tested is a blessing. This is why God allows this for all of us.

There is evil in the world and we get hurt. We get indignant about it. Unfortunately, we cannot do much for the evil all around the world but definitely we have the chance to dominate temptation within ourselves, facing the test, accepting the test, fighting strongly. We don't need to succeed. But what is important is to engage in the fight. This is what will bring us the blessing and the rest will be filled by God's grace.

Another one is trust in Christ, a deep faith in Jesus Christ who overcame temptation! We shared it many times in Jesus Christ. We are all there because we are part of His Body. So when the Spirit brought Jesus Christ into the desert, into the wilderness, we were all there and in Christ all of us, we have been tempted three times and in Jesus Christ we all overcame temptation, all of us.

This is our faith. This is the depth of our faith because we believe that we are one in Christ in His Body, the Church, we are in His Body in the wilderness and we will overcome temptation with Him. Until we are in communion with Him, we receive the grace, the blessing of beating the devil and temptation and sin and death until we are in communion with Him.

What is the job of the devil? - To disconnect us, to separate us from Christ so that we are no longer in the desert with Him. We need temptation and we need the devil, but we are still in the wilderness in the desert by ourselves alone. So a great trust, a great faith in Jesus Christ being part of His Body; that is another great tool!

Now all this I hope will be a good help for our Lent and all of us will decide what is the observance, what is the offering, what is the extra effort that we will do. A good tip that today someone gave me is to put a handful of quarters in the pocket, just a handful, no more than that and to give a quarter to people who are poor without judging that maybe this person will buy drugs, maybe this person will buy wine, maybe this person will do something wrong. It doesn't matter. Just give a quarter. Or another option is to come every day for Mass as an observance for Lent and the great miracle that has happened with this same person is that at the end of the Lent when this person decided to come every day for Mass is that this habit stayed with him/her and s/he continued to come day after day for Mass everything coming from the same Lent.

So all these little things. Now again, find the one that is more suitable to you and bring it back to this altar. This is something important that we read in the first reading, "Moses spoke to the people saying: 'When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God.'" When we offer bread and wine, let's remember, they are symbols. What we are offering is our lives and the good things that we do.

So when we come for Mass, I hope in these next weeks of Lent, bring here and with an act of faith, place your good deeds on this altar so that I can offer it to God because to

offer a piece of bread and a sip of wine that is not much as an offering, but bring the good things that you did. Bring your week, the whole week, all the good things that you did, the good things and also the mistakes. It doesn't matter. Bring everything here and I will offer to God all our lives.

Another little observance, and then I promise I'm finished, it could be to discover the tradition of limiting our use of meat. We met last week or two weeks ago with a group. We call it the Eco Justice Group. And we are trying to figure out together what are good ways for our community to work and to promote ecology and social justice.

And one of the things that came up is we need to rediscover our traditions because they are good, not for the sake of the tradition, but for the good that it brings. And a person was saying, "Maybe we can propose to the people to give up eating meat, as much as possible, even just once a week on Friday, as it was tradition. In Canada we can eat meat on Friday, why? Because fish is too expensive, so that's not fasting really. It's like saying, "Okay, what do you eat during the week?" "I eat sausages." "What do you eat on a Friday?" "I have fish, scallops and lobster." "Huh, good. If you fast in that way, I will come to visit you for lunch on Fridays."

So let's think again about this tradition. It is beautiful because it reminds us in a very little, simple, ordinary way of our commitment to fasting, to the Church, to the desire of conversion, of being in communion with God. It is a very little thing, if you can. If it's too expensive or you cannot eat fish, no worries. Could you do it with what you have? Maybe instead of meat, you can eat, I don't know, eggs or vegetables, or pasta or rice or whatever you want, but to find something to be as substitute. Why? Because it's important not

just for us for our faith, but also for our planet.

One of the things that we were sharing at this meeting is how much pollution we are producing and how much the effects of it are contributing to spoil our beautiful planet. There is a huge issue about climate change that goes in cycles on our planet, but there is also a lot of pollution that is ruining our beautiful home. One of the things that does this, is the massive industrial production of meat. There are mountains of meat produced. Now there are two things that we have to take into consideration, besides the fact that eating too much meat is not good because it damages your health. The point is that a cow, when it eats grass, gets the grass inside of its belly but it doesn't stay there. It ferments and starts the first part of digestion, but then the cow brings it back and chews it again. Only then the whole process of nutrition happens for the cow. During this process, there is so much gas that is produced and that is all pollution. Now, we are not talking about one poor cow and you know, the effects of burping, which is you know, it's unfortunate. We are not talking about one, we are talking about millions and millions of cows who do this every day for the sake of an industry. That is the first part.

The other part is where do these cows stay? The majority of cheap meat is produced in South America. And there are large portions of the Amazon forest that are the lungs of the planet, one of the most important lungs of our Earth. These Amazon forests are destroyed to make space to pasture the cows. Beautiful meadows, where all these millions of cows can go and eat the grass. Is there a need for that? Not really because it's industry, it is about business. It is not about feeding the poor or feeding families.

I hope that we will grow in our understanding of the responsibility that we have towards our planet. And we can do that with a very little observance, limiting our consumption of meat only for this Lent. Let's see what is going to happen. Let's see how it's going to impact our health. Let's see how that will make us feel as contributors of the health of our common home.



CURSILLO PRAYER LINE

Let us help one another lighten our burdens and what better way than to join regularly in prayer for one another. The Cursillo prayer line has been established especially for this and we want to encourage the greatest number of people to benefit from it. When we have occasions to pray in gratitude for the many blessings, we gladly share this and multiply our joy. We want to also care for one another through all occasions of life, to erase worry, lighten the burden, be a presence in hardship, to share with God's people who are in need. As a community, united, we want to look ahead in faith, and unwavering trust that God is indeed by our side in every battle and we are strengthened by the faith and confidence of all his people.

Become a member of the prayer line by contacting Yvonne, cursilloprayerline@gmail.com

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

◆ **ATLANTIC,**
Antigonish (Tri County,
Cape Breton East, Cape
Breton West) Halifax, St.
John's, Charlottetown,
Halifax/Yarmouth
(Yarmouth, Valley) Saint
John. (Miramichi)

◆ **QUEBEC,**
Montreal English.

◆ **ONTARIO,**
London Area,
Essex/Windsor, Kent
County/Chatham)
Peterborough, Toronto,
Hamilton, Ottawa,
Kingston, Thunder Bay,
Korean.

◆ **WESTERN,**
Vancouver, Edmonton,
Grouard-McLennan,
Northern Native Cursillo.

WESTERN REGION

VANCOUVER

We continue to offer Palanca for all Cursillo weekends, both nationally and internationally. We will do the same for the Halifax National conference in June.

We continue to gather for Ultreya on the first and third Saturdays of each month. Our numbers at Ultreya remain low and this is of ongoing concern to us.

Our last School of Leaders was on February 2nd. It was better attended than usual and filled with much inspiration as a result of an excellent rollo, great responses to the rollo and these all stimulated rich discussion.

We have cancelled Cursillo Weekends for 2019 and instead we will focus our efforts on building community, with an emphasis on Ultreya and School of Leaders, in addition to walking sincerely with candidates during their Pre-Cursillo.

After extensive prayer and discussion, Secretariat has prepared a letter to be sent to our Vancouver Cursillo community. This letter includes a specially prepared novena prayer. We are encouraging Cursillistas to live an authentic 4th Day so that our collective action is not centred on weekends, but instead on a Post-Cursillo where we actively participate in Ultreya and the School so that we support each other, learn from each other and seek to live an authentic Cursillo method. We are inviting our community to join us in prayer so that God will guide our collective actions in the coming months. Another prayer intention is that new leaders will emerge to participate in the work of this Charism in Vancouver.

Our AGM is scheduled for April 6th and it will be followed by a potluck.

Please keep our Movement in your prayers and we will do the same for the Cursillo Movement in Canada and around the world.

building bridges from coast to coast



EDMONTON

The School of leaders continues to meet on a monthly basis in a Cursillistas' home on Sunday afternoon with anywhere from 8 to 14 people in attendance. We appreciate this opportunity for good discussion, cementing friendships and deepening our knowledge of Cursillo.

We have a women's weekend beginning April 25th with about 15 candidates registered.

Ultreyas are the last Monday of the month with attendance numbers varying and there are still several group reunions that gather regularly. For a capital city our numbers are low, but we do have a committed and convicted core group attempting to live well the Cursillo method in all its richness.

Secretariat also continues to meet regularly to work out some details.

GROUARD MCLENNAN

Efforts are being made to extend better communication to all. CCCC provided a workshop on the Step by Step, 3-day guide in Grande Prairie. Much study and changes are taking place.

The men had a weekend March 7-10, and the Women's weekend is scheduled for April. Both the Rectora and the Rector are committed to using the Step by Step 3-day guide, which is new to us. We have simplified teams and streamlined the team meetings. We know that the Canadian

movements will be praying for us and we have experienced people who can make it work.

Our School of Leaders continues to meet every month of the year with most of the Secretariat attending.

CENTRAL REGION

ESSEX (WINDSOR)

A Men's and Women's Cursillo was recently held. Twenty-one men and 31 women participated. There are around 700 Cursillistas in the Windsor Area.

KINGSTON

After a 35-year absence of the Cursillo movement we are rebuilding the movement with assistance from the Toronto Cursillo Movement. In 2018 13 men and 17 women participated in the Three Day Cursillos using the Step by Step Rector's Guide. This year we held a Men's Cursillo on Mar. 28, and a Women's Cursillo will be held on July 11, 2019.

THUNDER BAY

The Thunder Bay Diocese Cursillo Movement is continuing to canvass Cursillistas to determine interest in hosting a CCCC conference. The Bishop of Thunder Bay has committed to celebrating the Masses if the conference takes place. Thunder Bay Cursillo is following the Step by Step Rector's Guide on their Three Day Cursillos.

LONDON

The London and Area Catholic Cursillo Movement has implemented the Step by Step, Rector's Guide on their Three Day Cursillos beginning this year. There were 10 men and 24 women that participated recently on the last two weekends of March 2019.

HAMILTON

The Hamilton Diocese Catholic Cursillo Movement has been holding Cursillo Weekends, using the Step by Step, Guide for a few years now. They are holding a Women's Cursillo in May and a Men's Cursillo in October of 2019. The Hamilton Diocese hosted the very successful 2018 CCCC Conference.

PETERBOROUGH

The School of Leaders continues to meet every two weeks studying the 10 topics of Cala Figuera. We sent one candidate to the Kingston men's Cursillo.

OTTAWA

The Ottawa Cursillo Movement held a Women's Cursillo in March and is holding a Men's Cursillo in April. There were approximately 16 women and 8 men participating. Study of the Step by Step Guide is beginning.

TORONTO

The Diocese of Toronto Cursillo Movement is following the Step by Step Guide when having a Three Day Cursillo. The Toronto Cursillo Movement is helping to re-establish the Cursillo Movement in Kingston. We have a School of Leaders every Monday night in two sessions per year, several months in Spring and several in the Fall.

CHINESE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

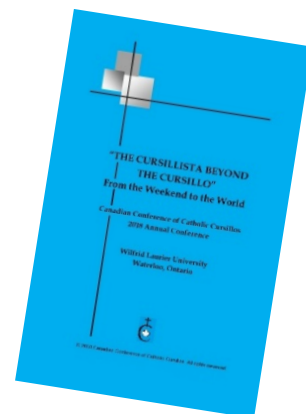
The Chinese Cursillo Movement is made up of people of Taiwanese Chinese descent and is based in Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver. The Toronto-based Cursillo Movement is holding Men's and Women's Cursillos simultaneously running parallel weekends on Aug. 2 - 5, 2019. We are expecting around 60 men and women candidates. We are following the Step by Step Guide. This year there will be many coming from Taiwan as candidates. We are hoping to strengthen and establish the Cursillo Movement in Taiwan.

THE SPANISH CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

The Spanish Cursillo Movement is in 5 Dioceses - Longueuil and Montreal, Quebec; Toronto, Hamilton and London, Ontario. Study of the Step by Step Guide is beginning.

We recently held a Men's Cursillo on March 14, 2019. We are holding a National School of Leaders at St. Martin / St. Francis Catholic Church in London, Ontario on May 19, 2019. We will be presenting 5 of the 10 topics of Cala Figuera. Next year We will address the remaining 5 topics. The Toronto Spanish Cursillo Movement is holding a Men's Cursillo the 3rd weekend of May and the Women's is the 4th weekend of May.

This is the 2018 conference booklet and it is available from the Resource Centre for \$7



Witness

Daily we touch Him

Living in God's Grace

Witness from Debbie Beaven, Thunder Bay, who made the Cursillo Three Days last summer in Thunder Bay.

I remember having very few expectations when I first agreed to attend a Cursillo weekend. I didn't know what it was all about; therefore, I changed my mind a few times before I finally leaped. When I think about it now, I believe my experience was better and easier to grasp, with no preconceived ideas or expectations. It became a life-altering experience for me personally, in my spiritual growth.

My life was spinning out of control in so many ways, issues that weigh down - so many were becoming overwhelming and unmanageable. I was on a merry go round, and I couldn't get off. My fear was for my physical health and mental health; I was becoming resentful, bitter, lonely and sad, searching for some inner peace, but struggling to let go and be at peace.

To survive and function in my life all these sixty-two years, I sought out help from many different avenues, for physical and mental issues, depression, marriage and grief counselling. I have reached out to friends, consulted with doctors, taken part in self-help groups, and tried to learn from my mistakes. I was never afraid to improve and better myself, so what was missing?

I believe in God; I attend Mass, I pray, I did a lot of volunteer work, and was always very involved in what had to be done. So again, what was missing in me?

My Cursillo weekend to my amazement and utter joy opened my mind and heart and gave me some answers and a new refreshing direction to follow.

The words "God's Grace", I had heard before but didn't understand the meaning. How do I fit in the Church? What is the Church? In simple terms it is me! People that make up the Church, what we do, how we act, and who we are, and what we share with others, that is God's Church. God's gifts to us, did I realize they are gifts? Reconciliation, a precious gift, I always regarded as something you had to do, something to be afraid of, a chore and scary prospect, but part of our obligation of being Catholic. I was thrilled to understand that it is a precious gift for all of us willing to accept it. God has given me the opportunity to lay my burdens, big or small, my shortfalls and mistakes in front of him. I can share in private what is weighing me down, preventing me from loving myself and sharing the love with others. He has given me the opportunity to be free of the negative and work towards a better me. Therefore, I am open to doing his work.

I am so excited to accept that I want to be his disciple; I no longer want to hide my feelings towards God. My mission is to walk with him, talk with him, lean on him and to share his words with someone every day. I learned, listened and opened my heart so much that Cursillo weekend. I believe the Holy Spirit is what brought me there and guided me on my journey of discovery. I also believe God has walked

with me, and sometimes carried me, every step of my life so far; he has always been there, I didn't embrace, appreciate it.

So how did all this help me after that amazing weekend, a place where I was safe and secure and the outside world, was not pounding on my door. Unfortunately, in the real world, it is challenging at times to put into practice all that you feel and desire to achieve. You get back into routines, the demands are still there, and the world keeps on turning. I began with baby steps, one prayer, one conversation, one moment at a time. The difference I found was in me!

There is a calmness now. I can now go to a safe place in my mind, sit quietly, talk to the Lord, then gain the strength and peacefulness I didn't have before. Another gift! I now lay my troubles and concerns before him and let go of what I cannot control. I am giving the control back to God, and in doing so, I no longer carry the burdens alone. Is this easy for me? Absolutely not. Am I successful all the time? Not really, but it is my lifeline to living now and a learning experience. I have faith that God will walk with me on this journey.

A crucial part of life after Cursillo, and probably the most important in staying focused and being supported, is forming and attending Group Reunion, preferably on a weekly basis with Cursillistas with whom you feel comfortable. Being in Group Reunion has given me the opportunity to share further my progress and successes and perhaps my difficulties in a comfortably safe environment, where people will listen and not judge. We pray, we support, and we listen and perhaps inspire someone else. The other opportunity I have is attending an Ultreya. We meet once a month, but it is open to all Cursillistas in the city, so it is a larger group. Again, I pray, I sing, I share and

connect with others working to do God's work. The support is invaluable and necessary to stay focused and grow in our journey with Christ.

I have been able to share with my son and husband about the church and what it means to me with strength and conviction, and in return, they have listened with respect and interest. I am astounded at the opportunities that open up for a conversation about God because I am open to hearing and sharing. I am now listening to others with empathy and understanding, not being judgmental. It is now so important for me to be there with a smile and a hug. The hugs and caring I receive are priceless. In meeting new people, I realize how similar some of our stories are. In sharing, and the relationships you can develop with them, I see how everyone has burdens and stories to tell. It's what you do with them and what you learn from them and realizing that you are never alone.

I pray regularly; sometimes at the craziest times, I am talking to God a lot, developing that relationship I was lacking, I sing hymns while cooking and cleaning and then laugh at myself in delight. Reading is essential; I am open to new thoughts, to be inspired. I smile so much more even with all the adversity of life, understanding now there is always a reason to smile. My desire now is to portray hope, love, and support to others every day. This message is what everyone deserves, and I now know that if I can be that person, then I am doing God's work, and that is my goal.

It is challenging to put all these feelings, insights and experiences on paper; some are such subtle changes; others are larger and more evident to me. What I do know is there are changes happening all the time. It's a feeling, a different mindset, it's a hope and a freedom, I didn't allow myself to have

before. It's me letting the control go and realizing there is something bigger and better, a gift I have always had in front of me. Now I walk with God every day, trusting in my relationship with him, knowing I never have to be alone and accepting his never-ending love for me always. I am Blessed!

De Colores
Debbie Beaven

ESSAY

The Camino, Dave Koruder, Edmonton Cursillo

I have always loved hiking and walking in the woods. Last year I had discussions with my brother Ken about joining him in walking the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain. There are many variations of this ancient pilgrimage route that all end up at the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela - in fact, the beginning for many European pilgrims is their front door! There are five very well-known and well-travelled routes and Ken and I decided to walk the Camino Primitivo from the city of Oviedo through to Santiago, a distance of 320 km.

The main difference between this walk and anything else I had ever done in my life was wrapped up in the concept of pilgrimage. What exactly is a pilgrimage? A pilgrimage is a journey or a search of moral or spiritual significance. Typically, it is a journey to a shrine or location of importance to one's beliefs and faith. I had been fascinated by the book *The Art of Pilgrimage*, which I read prior to leaving. The concept of pilgrimage can be much broader than just a Christian journey to Santiago and it is possible to have a pilgrimage without leaving your home. You can be a pilgrim in a metaphorical sense, on an interior journey.

Both Ken and I were looking forward to making this a spiritual journey. The night before we left Canada, we went to mass here at OLPH and after mass sought a Pilgrim's Blessing from Fr. Jim, which he was only too happy to give. In Oviedo, we visited the Cathedral, spent time in the Museum of Sacred Art and time touring the cloister. We attended an early morning mass the day before we started where the bishop and the number of priests almost exceeded the members of the congregation. There was a special feeling, knowing that King Alfons the Chaste had set out from this exact spot as the original pilgrim in 890. I believe in the same Jesus Christ and his apostle Saint James in the same vein as King Alfonso! Along the Camino, we took time to visit the small chapels and the large cathedrals to spend time in prayer or attend a Mass. In one town, A Fonsagrada, we went to an evening Mass and after Mass received a Pilgrim's Blessing from the priest. The Pilgrim's mass that we attended in Santiago on the morning after we completed the Camino was very powerful! I had tears in my eyes at many points in the Mass as I thanked God for the blessings of the Camino, our safety and happiness, and the blessings of my friends and family back home.

For me, this physical journey of walking an average of 25 km per day was a beautiful gift of time and space. I had been through a very busy summer and fall and was truly looking forward to the freedom of just waking up in the morning and only having to do one thing - walk! I had read about people making a pilgrimage journey for special blessings of healing or wellness, for special blessings from God. Early on, I was asked by a fellow pilgrim why I was doing the Camino. Was there a special request, favour or blessing that I sought? Indeed, initially that was the major reason that any pilgrim would walk the Camino - to seek

special favour from God, through the intercession of St. James. I had to answer that for me this was simply a journey of gratitude. I felt so blessed by God and just wanted to walk every day in joyful thanksgiving for all of the graces and blessings showered down upon me and my family! I realize that too often I do not fully express to God the gratefulness of heart that I feel for everything that God has created. This was my chance! Every day became a prayer of thanks for the gifts in my life: Phyllis, Jessica and Mike, Hilary, Rob and Dominic, my brothers, and all of my extended family. The friends who have made my journey in life so rich - especially my Cursillo friends! I thanked God for the beauty of creation and the joy of each new day. I would pray the rosary and during each decade I would thank God for certain of the blessings. Sometimes it would take me two hours to pray the rosary as I would wander off in my prayers of thanks for so many people and I would recall their gifts and talents that I was thankful for.

A few themes began to emerge early in the Camino that are so apt as life lessons. One of these is the importance of looking for the waymarks. The Camino is a path or WAY that we follow in order to reach the destination of Santiago. The way is made up of a variety of pathways, trails, tracks, country roads and forest walkways. The path is very circuitous and does not just follow the straight line of the highway from Oviedo to Santiago. This WAY was first established in the late 800's by King Alfonso II (Alfonso The Chaste) who was the first to pioneer the route. There are many sections of the modern Camino that are original pathways, dug deeply into the soft earth of the Asturian or Galician countryside. In order to ensure that one continues on the known route, there are yellow markers and arrows that mark the way. These are sometimes formal concrete pillars with the

scallop shell marker and kilometre marks. More often they are spray painted arrows on the ground, on the back of traffic signs, on old tree trunks or the sides of buildings in the small rural villages that we would pass through. Ken and I needed to be alert for these waymarks at all times. We got lost a few times due to a lack of attention and had to either retrace our steps or make an educated guess at the next intersection and try to find the Camino again. Isn't this like life? We strive to stay in the WAY and we look for waymarks and indicators to assure us that we are on the right path. Jesus said "I am the WAY, the truth and the life. "In our journey through life it is easy to become lost, off the track or confused. We have need of guidance through our Church, our friends, the Bible and our prayers to God. In some places where we walked, there were even false arrows put there by owners of hostels and restaurants who wanted you to veer off the path and come to their establishment. It was important to discern what was true and what was not.

Another theme that struck me was Alone and Together. Each day, my brother Ken and I would begin walking together usually around 8 a.m. It may still be slightly dark, but we would head out and watch the dawn break as we walked. Often, we would walk together and talk about everything under the sun. Just as often we would be separated by some distance and just walk in our own thoughts and prayers. We met many wonderful people from all over the world as we walked along. In the course of the two weeks of our Camino, we played a kind of leapfrog with a core of the same people. We might pass them early and then they would catch up for a mid-morning café con leche at a roadside bar or restaurant. At the end of the day, we would probably meet them again in the hostel or at supper. There grew a deep friendship with these fellow pilgrims, and we came to call each other our

Camino Family. John and Alison from England, Daniella from Mexico and her boyfriend Hans from the Netherlands, Martin from Germany, Vanessa and her Dad, Daniel from Red Deer and Stephanie from Quebec - all became our Camino Family. We shared many meals together and many discussions about our lives, our faith, our joys and our sorrows. We supported each other in ways big and small - from offering moleskin for a blister, to walking with someone who was really struggling that day with a heavy pack. We planned several events together, one of which was a walk around the Roman Wall at Lugo, a city that we all decided to stay an extra day visiting, because it was so historic. In Santiago, we organized a final supper together and exchanged email addresses and hopes to keep in touch. Isn't this a lot like life? We each have to journey on our own, but we come to know real **joy** by sharing the experiences with friends along the way. The Cursillo charism is based on journeying with friends and sharing the joys and challenges of the journey.

There are several bits of Camino wisdom that are passed on from pilgrim to pilgrim.

-One of these is "Everyone has to walk their own Camino". Each of us must be responsible for the path that we walk and for the way in which we walk it. There are some people who walk with only a day pack and send their luggage on to the next hotel by a taxi service. There are some pilgrims who walk with earbuds in and listen to music the entire time. The important thing is not to judge others or to feel that your way of walking the Camino is the only way of doing it. Everyone has to walk their own Camino. I do not know the circumstances or backstory of any of the other pilgrims until I engage with them and begin to befriend them. Once I do that, I am much more able to avoid judging them. - Stop every once in a while and turn around!

Look at where you have come from and examine the view in the rear-view mirror! I nearly missed an incredible sunrise one morning by not turning around and witnessing the beauty of the sun coming up over a sea of low-lying clouds in the Galician hillside - the tops of the hills were like islands in the ocean of the morning fog! Every now and then, it is good for us to recognize where we have come from and what the view looks like behind us. We can't live there or go back there, but our history is rich and beautiful in many ways. In my daily prayers, I would remember my Mom and Dad, Phyllis's Mom and Dad, my aunts who lovingly cared for my grandma and many others who have gone on to their Fifth Day. I appreciate the impact and the influence that they have had on my life and my faith. Their presence in my life has allowed me to be where I am on my pathway today.

-The pathways are diverse and not always easy to walk. There were sections of the Camino that were muddy and nearly impassable. Other sections had large rocks and boulders that were hard on the ankles. There were lots of uphill climbs that tested my lungs! There were beautiful soft forest paths in shaded woods. All of these were there and could not be changed, altered or avoided. Each type of path had to be walked. Some days were easier than others. Isn't that also so true of our Christian walk on a daily basis? There are some days when we walk a path that is very rough and rocky. We feel pain or tiredness and wonder if we can keep on going. Other days the trail seems much easier, the downhill stretches give us a respite for a while, and we feel uplifted in the journey. All of these paths must be walked.

When we finished in Santiago, Ken and I went into the chapel of the Camino offices and sat in great appreciation for all that God had offered us during this amazing

experience. There was a slide show and music playing with some very wonderful thoughts to reflect upon. They were a kind of beatitudes for pilgrims:

*Blessed are you Pilgrim if you discover that one step back to help another is more valuable than a hundred forward without seeing what is at your side.

*Blessed are you Pilgrim when you don't have words to give thanks for everything that surprises you at every twist and turn of the way.

*Blessed are you, Pilgrim, if you discover that the Camino opens your eyes to what is not seen.

Remember that this Camino was through northern Spain. All of the signs, language in restaurants, etc. were in Spanish. I was profoundly moved by an experience at about the 290 km mark on the Camino. We were still about 40 km away from Santiago, but the Camino was getting a bit busier as the joining of the Frances and the Primitivo at Melide meant more traffic, more people, more busyness. I had a sense of excitement but also of fatigue and almost wishing it was over. We were passing through a concrete underpass under a major roadway and the inside of the tunnel was covered with colourful graffiti. In great big, yellow letters was the word "ULTREYA!" Onward! I thought of you, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ! I thought of our efforts to encourage each other in our faith journey, with cries of "ULTREYA!"

One of my biggest learnings on the Camino was to place a greater trust in God. There were so many big and small examples of how God was always looking out for us and providing for us, even though we knew nothing of it. There was never a night when we did not have a bed to sleep in or a meal to nourish us. I was initially nervous about not booking a room ahead, but then began to relax and just enjoy whatever God had in

store for us that night. If I can trust in God's plans and providence for me then I can also learn to relax and worry less about any of the details. Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:26-33, "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.** Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble."

This Camino experience has been a wonderful way for me to draw closer to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ. I appreciate the many centuries of faith-filled pilgrims who have walked the same route that I did, worshipped in the same churches and cathedrals, ate and drank the body and blood of our Lord. They also wanted to draw closer to God and lead holy lives. This rich tradition of faith embedded in the Camino makes it so much more than just a nice walk. It makes it a pilgrimage!

"At its heart, the journey of each life is a pilgrimage, through unforeseen sacred places that enlarge and enrich the soul"
John O'Donohue

FROM EDUARDO

The following is an excerpt from History of a Charism by Eduardo Bonnin. It should be noted that the book is a collection of Eduardo's writings, some written in previous years, so the dates will not appear to be current. Sections I-III were printed in Volume 18 Issue 2.

COMMUNICATION OF THE DIOCESAN SECRETARIAT OF MALLORCA TO THE IV WORLD ENCOUNTER OF THE LEADERS OF THE CURSILLO IN CHRISTIANITY

IV. SIMPLE, EASY TO IMITATE

It is well known that all inventions, when they are simple, precisely because of their simplicity, soon become universal and cannot be patented. Since they are easily imitated, they give rise to a chain of mimicry, which is very difficult, if not impossible to stop.

Although at that time there were no patents, we can certainly say that something like this happened with the invention of the wheel, and closer to us, the invention of the pen, slotted shelves, the mobile shelves of refrigerators, ice-cube trays, etc. All these things have a different purpose, and if they serve it, they fulfil their function.

The Cursillo Movement is also simple, and if so many people had not complicated it, it would be even more simple. The issue is that it consists of simple elements that are its components, but all of them are situated, harmonized, and directed towards a concrete purpose and target that, by the grace of God and the prayers of many, succeeds in a time and place. What is true becomes timely, the fact that goodness is attractive, and that what is possible is concrete.

Supposedly, as we say, all this is achieved

by grace and common sense in a natural and human process, thought up, reflected on, prayed for, and repeated a thousand times. It consists precisely in the fine-tuned and precise assembly of each of its pieces, and all of them vertebrated and coordinated so that they fit the modern man, just like men of old, loosely and in a responsive way. But not just by themselves, but because of what they have of the Gospel, because no matter how the circumstances may change, man stays the same and so does the Gospel.

V. THEOLOGICAL TARGET OF THE CURSILLOS

The genuineness of the Cursillo is in this living, dynamic, coherent, and consistent alignment, directed towards the purpose that it pursues. Perhaps, calling it genius might seem pretentious, although it would be true.

To understand it better, these three points of reference may be of great help:

1. The Cursillo participates in the uniqueness of the Church, as an "event" of salvation: a time, a place, some people, an ideology, a mystique, a style, a method open to all kinds of people that, by the grace of the Lord, emerges one day in the Church.

2. The Cursillo, with its distinctiveness (understood as "signs of identity"), enters, in a comparative sense, into the sacramentality of the Church that is proclaimed by Vatican II. That is to say, with its uniqueness and vibrancy. As a work of the Church, it tends to announce or signify the message of grace and salvation and also to produce it. And Cursillo has forty years of experience behind it.

3. The Cursillo, considered as a distinct Apostolic Movement, has an essence that is well-defined and valid. This essence distinguishes it from other ecclesial movements, associations, etc., and it cannot and should not be altered, without grave

injury. Doing so would be to “choke off the Spirit.” It would mean not accepting its charism. “Do not quench the Spirit ...”; or, if you prefer, “don’t touch the rose.”

VI. THE CURSILLO, A PLATFORM?

Despite this being the case - why deny it - often this is done by imposition (no other material is available in such a generous posture).

The Cursillo Movement has stimulated and enlivened many movements, as well as grassroots communities, and Cursillo does not aim to ignore any community, group, or association that has already been established, or that is considering being established.

Perhaps, the time has come for some serious thinking – this can be an invitation to do so – there is no doubt that it can be done. This could be done if it had been deepened, studied, and reflected on the Movement's own identity, on the power it has when its means are used to achieve its specific purpose, and when the purpose is not distorted by directing it to very good and praiseworthy things that are foreign to the specific purpose that must be pursued from its own identity so as to be faithful to the original idea.

VII. MUST WE CIRCUMCIZE THE “GENTILES” OF TODAY?

One just has to see that the Cursillo Movement proposes a new perspective and a brand new focus, “in the language of man” we can say that if this is not understood it costs the Church dearly, because we will be losing the persons who have greater drive and boldness, those who know the Christian message and can take it to today’s “gentiles.”

Today as in the primitive Church there are those who believe that those converted to the faith have to be circumcised. They demand obligations and commitments, instead of giving the new ones the stage so that they go along figuring things out, then with full conviction and even with enthusiasm, they will continue along becoming a little more Christian each day according to the means that the Church prescribes. To keep in line with this idea, we have always tried to create structures that are minimal and marginal: the Group Reunion and the Ultreya. This is precisely because managing to provoke hunger is something very different from having to sustain routine activities, and the need to sustain routine activities takes away the pleasure and the desire for doing them. Sometimes this reveals a look of disgust and weariness on those who always have to implement these routine activities.

Coordination and intercommunication are extremely difficult, when attitudes, approaches, and criteria differ and are diametrically opposed.

To rebuild the fabric of community we must not ignore that, from its very beginning there have always been two currents in the Church. This is no doubt a distortion of the will of its founder. One goes from the ritual to the man and the other goes from the man to the ritual. This is a given truth that we cannot ignore, if we want to be with Christ, who is the Truth, and with the Church, which is officially responsible for proclaiming and serving this Truth. What matters is that we Christians learn to love ourselves, and so we cannot try to eliminate anyone who is going to the same place but happens to be using another pathway to get there.

VIII. THE ONLY "WHAT" THAT MATTERS

All "hows" are secondary and are only effective when they place before us the only "what" that matters.

When the man of today, or even of the past, is in his normal pathway, with the "what" of Christ as the North Pole of his life, no one in the world is clever enough to really foresee where he can go.

In one of the first outlines in which the founders of the Cursillo tried to make known their purpose and method, we already said that "the uncontrolled proliferation of good seed produces more rare (strange) conflicts than do the weeds"; anyone can see that the Cursillo Movement, when it flows along in its genuine channel, with its living human energy, propelled by the Spirit, needs to be treated with a lot of tact, to keep from frustrating enthusiasm and precisely, above all, not to smother the Spirit. And it is even more important that this spiritual energy awakened, by the grace of God, in the minds and hearts of those attending a Cursillo does not get lost nor wasted. Instead it must serve to help us understand the beneficial influence of the Church in the most faraway places that are foreign to its normal radius of action.

This is achieved naturally, by the normal way of life that each one lives, when the climate of friendship achieved in the Cursillo becomes perennial and contagious, thanks to the Group Reunion and the Ultreya. Both of these tools, when they are understood, attended, comprehended, and not distorted, not only maintain the Cursillo's climate, but they communicate it. They expand it; and they activate it; with an attitude, a style, and even a language, which is its own, and which presides over and expresses its being and its doing, in the

world where the cursillistas live and live together. This is the language the men and women we want to approach can figure out, if we do not want to live isolated from the world.

We know very well that the usual Christians and the new ones must not stop being who they are. They must not cut off self-expression, simply for the mere fact of not understanding them, the same as always - especially by cutting them off from above by mandate, or by subtle suggestion, which allows us to hide the mandate. This is not the best way to reach the living and active symbiosis that the Lord undoubtedly wants.

Some who have recently emerged from a Cursillo have a transitory effervescent criterion that we no doubt have the obligation to try to understand. This isn't about, as some of those recently emerged from a Cursillo may think and perhaps say, the fact that to them it seems more important to be a cursillista than to be a Christian and by being a cursillista they have the delusional task of having to put the whole Church at the rhythm of Cursillo.

IX. TO LOVE IS TO COME TO UNDERSTANDING

A cursillista, like any man, has the urgent need to be understood, which we say is the same as being loved and feeling loved. Hence it is expedient, or better said, necessary, that bishops with priests and their closest collaborators live with the sufficient willingness, that will always be the precise one they need to take advantage of experiencing a Cursillo. Otherwise, for sure even thinking about making it a gift to God, will distort Cursillo's purpose. It will run the water of the cursillistas' spirit down that same old routine mill-race, and there the water will gradually form a pool in the

set-up that others have set-up/devised for him, where only the very holy and very stupid remain/abide, and since there are very few saints, it is easily predictable and in all probability will happen and in some cases is already happening.

It is a pity that one does not realize that the automatic use of the converts in what is called the "Pastoral Plan of the Church" has been depriving the Church of the most human, spontaneous, alive, and most focused part of society and therefore of what builds a better foundation for being completely Christian and can also achieve so much more.

But it is also evident that, if the selection has been made as it should be, the cultivation of these cursillistas is usually extremely contentious and difficult. Normally they are men with great personality, but by the same measure they are therefore extremely interesting, attractive, and even fascinating.

X. UNIMAGINED CONSEQUENCES OF THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

The Gospel does not tell us what happened in the house of the father of the prodigal son once the feast for the longed-for son's return is over.

It is likely that the father had to intervene more than once administering, to each of his two children separately, the balm of his exquisite charity for the wounds they caused by lacking it.

Surely, he would take them one after the other, to avoid envy, and to let his words take a different path to reach the heart of each of them.

We imagine that he was a just man, but we also suppose that, because of the immense joy at the return of the son, the father

overlooked/disregarded his son's ways and his performances and talking. Maybe he did not act properly and even acted in an uncultured manner because of having patronized environments so distant and different from the education his father had given him.

We have to assume that this story did not have a second act; that the son did not leave a second time. And if he did not, it is likely that it was because of the part that his father played with his great understanding. This must have been so; it must have even softened the hard shell formed in the heart of the other son because of feeling that he was the "good one".

What has happened, what still unfortunately happens, what is very true, although it hurts us, is that we so often do not know our role, our place, and our attitude. And so, the parable of the prodigal son has continued in real life. It counters all our plans, after the grace of God and the prayers of many brothers something has happened that, when things are not unduly complicated, usually almost always happens.

After his father's embrace the prodigal son has not only become good, he has become an apostle; and it's a good thing that he has not asked permission to read the readings in the Synagogue. It is good that, for the moment, he is not worried about the economically disadvantaged men who come to his father and his brother looking for some help. Instead he has become aware, in a powerful way, of problems that he believes can possibly be solved with a very specific solution, if only he steps up and takes action.

He can remember very well some of his "friends" whom he helped to precipitate their slide down the path of debauchery and

vice when he was throwing away his money with his misunderstood freedom to squander it as he pleased. There were plenty of them, and he can't get them out of his head; since now there is more light in his mind and more warmth in his heart. As soon as he can, he provokes the circumstances, he pretends he has just bumped into them and finds an excuse to speak with them; at first they even laugh at him, but he keeps at it and already has some of them halfway convinced; Now he and the others discover that what they had called friendship was really something else.

He often brings them home to his father's house and even invites them to dinner there. His father is happy and even tells his friends, the ones who are really friends, and they also rejoice with him. But not the servants of the house, because the schedule of the meals has been altered, the after-dinner gatherings are prolonged. These servants have to go to bed later than usual, and tomorrow they have to get up early. There is no doubt that the young man's new friends have complicated everything for the servants of the house. Everything was simpler; everything was easier; everything went better when the father and the eldest son dined alone. There were no cross words or very few of them, and, although there was no joy, at least there was order. Well, before the longed-for son's return, it was common that some days the father was sadder and more nostalgic than usual. And now and then someone, clearly with very little delicacy, asked him, in front of others the painful question, if he knew anything of the whereabouts of his youngest son; or, without stopping to consider the discomfort that the contrast would cause him, another would tell him about the last good actions of his good children, who were always so proper and hard-working.

It seems that we cannot persuade ourselves

that there is nothing that can continue as in the past when the converts enter the arena of the pious ones. It is not that we have to put these new men *ipso facto* into the cockpit to chart the course and take the command of the apostolic machinery. But we do have to put down in the account, in spite of ourselves, that they know better than anybody in the Secretariat, who the candidates are that should be selected to go to Cursillo. And they know what we must do so that after these have gone to the Cursillo none of their human values are lost. These values are simply the best runways for approaching the authentic Christian in a natural way.

XI. ECUMENISM BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Reality does not allow us to be exclusionists. And the Cursillo Movement, without any doubt, where it has been able to best grow and develop, has been when these two ways of being Christians, or rather the people who embody them, can draw close to each other, to know, to dialogue, to respect each other, and even to admire each other.

Obviously, the Cursillo Movement can better carry out its mission when these traditional Christians know how to live a Cursillo with humility. As we have mentioned so many times, instead of trying, yes, in the name of God, to carry the water to their mill or muddy it for the purpose of baptizing them better, they know how to live a weekend-Cursillo with humility to be able to live later closer to the cursillistas, without paternalism, with real friendship.

And when the one who has regained his sight says, like the man born blind, that men resemble trees, try to understand them and do not let loose on them a treatise on anatomy or botany, but take the expression at face value.


Because today, just as in the past, the blind who open their eyes to the light of truth, need our unveiled attention, our detailed charity, to always keep in mind and in action, especially with these persons, the evangelical mandate "love others as you love yourself."

The fact that, above all in the beginning, the new cursillistas normally and regularly conduct Group Reunions and they come with real interest and enthusiasm; keep in mind that all this can be ruined with a full refusal of the list of four or five candidates presented by the one who was the hardest to peel at the last Cursillo, or when it is met with a knowing smile. And there are many other things; take care that the meeting place is open so that they can meet and infect each other, if necessary, take care that they turn off the lights, and do not leave the key in the lock. All these are activities that it is very difficult to expect from the new converts. And at the same time, it is the way for both us and them to arrive very soon at the place where we do not use the word "you" to designate the others, but to state the same truth as Father Damien in Molokai, when he said: "We the lepers."

XII. THE WIDE WORLD OF CHRISTIAN POSSIBILITIES

All this and much more than this can be achieved when, in the realities that men live, they can see up close that men like themselves, men with deep conviction, men with enthusiastic decisiveness, who are living their genuine lives, express by their gestures and by their disposition that life is worth living and that life makes sense.

And this usually starts and then continues something, if one is not distracted by secondary things, because the most novel thing about the Cursillo is that the layman launches his apostolate on its specific runway and with his ordinary and particular style, his, the one that God, Himself, has given him. This propels him into the joyous adventure of simplifying and facilitating the pathway to go on encountering himself so that, from himself, he discovers that the encounter with Christ and with his brothers can keep on widening and become friendship, as it becomes a reality in the Group Reunion and in the Ultreya.



Don't forget to send the dates of your weekends to the Resource Centre so we can include them on the web site

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