



## REFLECTION: DISCOVER

My name is Estellita René and I am from the beautiful island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean, a small island state with a population of 170,000 people - just about the same as Jackson, Mississippi. The Cursillo Movement is very active in St. Lucia with just over 600 members. I lived my Cursillo from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> Sept 1992; according to what I was told, my 4<sup>th</sup> day started on the 28<sup>th</sup> of Sept 1992 and ends on the day that I die. I sat at St. Monica's table. So, I am here to share with you my personal reflection and testimony on Eduardo's writings entitled "DISCOVER".

To **discover** according to the Google dictionary means "to find something/someone unexpectedly or in the course of a search". Still other definitions speak of finding knowledge of, for the first time. So as we delve into Eduardo's writing let us probe a little further to discover what it is to be Christian. In my summary of this writing, Eduardo details how to become a better Christian throughout all of life.

I was not privileged like many of you to have met Eduardo in person – sometimes I feel a little jealous – but from the very first time that I entered his office and sat in his chair in Mallorca, I felt a deep spiritual connection. It was such an amazing experience, I felt that he was staring at me and that I knew him personally. I have taken a keen interest in his inspiring writings and they all seem to have had been inspired by the Holy Spirit, all indeed so profound.

From a very young age, reading has been my main source of discovery. Television was not as popular as it is today and the Internet was probably not even thought of yet. It was through reading that I could get excited about the mysteries of the unknown and the wonders of science. It was where the story came alive as I continued to discover. As I grew and became an adult reading unfolded different facts according to my interests and as a Christian adult, again there is a more focused process. I am sure many of you can identify with this personal development.

In the article, discovery connotes a process which is not time bound, where one has time to find out in his or her own time. There is a certain sense of being given the freedom so that we can discover and "re-discover". This is supported by Eduardo, when he wrote, "to discover is to know that the life of man is an arrow shot from nothing to infinity, from the transient to the immutable, from time to eternity". When I was asked to do the Cursillo weekend in 1992, I did not hesitate as I was excited to see what I would discover. I was raised by my grandparents who were staunch Catholics and going to Church and participating in Church activities was not negotiable. Although one may have been Catholic all their life, the 3 day Cursillo experience allows us to re-discover, to become aware, to regain consciousness and focus on becoming a better Christian throughout all of life and to eternity. It allows for personal discovery.

We are told that Christianity is not a doctrine to be known but a reality that must be lived. So today, the choices that I make in my life to serve the Lord are all because of that discovery. In order to embody what it means to be Christian in daily life, Christianity must be lived in connection with life itself, flowing from what life is and internalizing the realities that lead to the summit of what it means to be Christian. The experience of being Christian is personal and singular – God in Christ loves us. God loves me. We must discover that God loves each and every one of us in order to feel loved by God and to live in the wonder of that love. Allowing ourselves to be loved by God is a huge part of that discovery and opens us to being more genuinely Christian.



In our own lives, we must come to discover that it is not enough to settle for the fact that we had the best encounter of our lives in the 3-day Cursillo but to continue to grow through love and friendship. However, I did not fully discover the facts of the magnitude of God's love at my weekend. It is by my life's experiences that I continue to discover every day that there are new friendships to be established while living with life's daily trials. Here I am today speaking with so many Cursillista friends in this Eduardo encounter. My experiences in the Cursillo caused me to discover aspects of my personality that I did not know I possessed. Although for most of my life I have been a teacher, I never liked the limelight, I have always preferred to help others discover their potential, while being the guide on the side. My experiences in the Cursillo also caused me to keep my eyes on the prize, to focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and not on myself. I learnt to lean on Him and to understand that He must increase while I decrease.

As this process of discovery continues I have learnt to love others unconditionally, as Christ loves me unconditionally. This has brought new meaning to Jn. 15:17 - *"This is my command that you love one another as I have loved you"*. This is a tall order but I am discovering what it means to love God, self and others. I don't always hit the mark but there is always good intention. This has given me freedom to discover that it is not enough to settle for having had a personal encounter with Christ but to start a dialogue and establish a friendship with anyone I meet. So, in the past I may have chosen to stick to myself and mind my own business, I now choose to undertake a follow-up with all my trials in order to end up living in a community with Christ and others.

So, how do I undertake the task of bringing Christ to others? How do I form new friendships? How do I make a friend and bring that friend to Christ? What am I doing to ensure that someone/everyone discovers Christ through me? How is my life a witness so that I can transmit the true message of salvation? Having lived the 3 day Cursillo, how can I truly show that the light of the Gospel is in my mind and the fire of the Gospel is in my heart, so that all can discover Christ?

In the Rollo on "Study and Evangelization of Environments", we discovered that we are called to be Light, Salt and Leaven in our environments and that our lives must be beacons which can guide others. We must discover that inner self to overcome obstacles such as arrogance, greed and selfishness. It is for me to personally discover that inner space in me where God abides. I can only accomplish this with His grace. It is only then that others will discover Christ through me.

We all know that life is not without its challenges and while we intend to, it may not always happen. It has been said that "the road to heaven is paved with good intentions". This is so true, as sometimes when I am challenged or overwhelmed by life's situations, I believe that the Lord knows my heart and I find myself reflecting on a presentation, a book or a writing from Eduardo and have found myself in tears in my quiet time saying, "Lord, you brought me to this you must take me through it. Here I am Lord, I want to do your will. I am yours, you can count on me. Help me by your grace".

In the writings of the "1<sup>st</sup>. Conversations of Cala Figuera – Aug. 19-22, 1994", Eduardo himself says that "friendship is the best channel to understand a person; it is the most profound form of coexistence and it turns coexistence into a feast". He goes on to affirm that "friendship makes it possible for friends to talk as equals, without having to use annoying filters to avoid misunderstandings; to express what they feel deep in the intimacy of their souls, without fear of not being listened to or not being understood when expressing their feelings and thoughts". I have come to discover the true meaning of these words as I attempt to explore new ways of "making a friend and being a friend" to bring souls to Christ. I serve the Lord through those I meet on a daily basis on the street, the bus, the Bank or wherever the Lord takes me. In the past I would not be brave enough but now I try to strike up a conversation with an unknown person every time I go out, even if it is just to ask "How is your day going today?" The conversations started are always amazing and I have made new friends. I make a determined effort for someone to discover Christ through me, through my friendship.



I wish to thank FEBA USA for organizing this week with Eduardo and for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts on his writings – DISCOVER. It is through events like these that we truly discover the thinking and mentality of the gift that is EDUARDO BONNIN AGUILO, and the legacy that he has left for us to follow. Preparing this reflection and listening to the recordings during this week have been truly inspirational. I therefore leave us to reflect on Eduardo's words:

***“Brothers and sisters, the most formidable does not consist in having discovered it, but rather, that if we want we can make everyone discover it, because we can and must be transmitters and witnesses of the jubilant and triumphant message of salvation that Christ bequeathed to us, so that tomorrow we can rediscover it together, in a permanent re-issue of what is reliable and true since it is the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE”.***

Brothers and sisters, we have been given the roadmap to living a truly authentic Christian life – let us open our hearts to discover.

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