

# The Cursillo Weekend

## Introduction

The Cursillo Weekend is a witness of Christ's friendship. What is essential is that people become friends. This is not our doing but the Lord's! The Cursillo Weekend has its proper place in the method, but if the Postcursillo phase is not functioning according to its purpose, the Cursillistas' perseverance will not become a reality. That's why the unity and integrity of the three phases are essential for the purpose of Cursillo.

The most important thing is that there are people who live and share the essentials of Christianity in their daily lives, people who, as we say, live in a climate of Group Reunion and relate to a living Christianity in Action at the Ultreya.

We do not hold Group Reunions and Ultreyas, so the Cursillo Weekend becomes possible. On the contrary, the Cursillo is organized so that there are groups of people whose members meet and accept each other as they are, realizing that they can be more and be better and who wish to make the journey from where they are to where God wants them to be in the company of friends.

The Cursillo Weekend, above all, is the living and sharing of what is fundamental to being Christian through the method of friendship. It is the discovery of the invitation to the candidate to *come and see*. This is the same Precursillo that Philip applied to engage Nathanael. When Philip told Nathanael that Jesus was the Messiah, Nathanael was doubtful. But rather than trying to convince his friend, Philip said, "Come and see." (John 1:46) Then Jesus said of Nathanael, "Here is a true child of Israel. There is no duplicity in him." The invitation facilitated an encounter with self, Christ, and others.

The Cursillo Weekend is a method that facilitates the experience of the joyful communication of the essentials of Christianity. A method is a systematic, timely, and orderly implementation of techniques. The technique is the method, ways, and means that lead to achieving the purpose.

## The Technique During the Cursillo Weekend

The technique for the Cursillo is the application of psychology and theology in an orderly manner, step-by-step. Therefore, each day has a defined schedule and sequential order of the rollos.

"Cursillos in Christianity reveal and put into practice the fact that theology (God and his Grace) and psychology (the person and his freedom) are truly parallel." (Structure of Ideas)

"The practical results [of theology and psychology] in Cursillo are more than sufficient to convince us that when [Gospel] realities are explained and lived, those who only desired to be men or women now desire to be saints also, and those who only desired to be saints give more importance to the human factor and the nature that sustain Grace." (Structure of Ideas)

Here's another way to look at this. The men and women who go to Cursillo hoping to find [encounter] themselves end up finding [encountering] God. And the men and women who go to Cursillo hoping to find [encounter] God end up finding [encountering] themselves. The reality is

that all men and women who attend a Cursillo have the same opportunity to make the three essential encounters with self, Christ, and others through the theology and psychology presented on the Weekend. Therefore, when we follow the Rector's Guide, everything will fall in place according to God's plan and the person's freedom.

The Rector(a) and the team must understand that the activities outlined in the Rector's Guide are based on theology and psychology. The intended purpose is to provide opportunities for encounters and interactions so that the cursillistas become friends with Christ and eventually become friends with each other. Understanding this will help us avoid the temptation to modify things in Cursillo.

Below is a quote from St. Pope John Paul II about the founder and charism. He helps us understand "who" has the authority to define the "how" and the "why" of a Movement.

*"As the founder gradually discovers the various dimensions of the charism, he indicates the goals [purpose] to be reached and defines the method and organizational structures."* (The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops, Laity Today, Volume 4, p. 29)

The technique used during the Cursillo Weekend is the implementation of both human and theological resources:

- The most crucial source is God's Grace.
- The retreat phase facilitates communication with oneself.
- The Spiritual Rollos and meditations communicate the message.
- The Lay Rollos bear witness to the message through our personal life.
- The Acts of Piety facilitate and bring about the encounter with Christ.
- The Table Groups facilitate a dialogue and an encounter between people.
- The Songs, Games, and Jokes facilitate an environment to create a break, clear the mind, communicate, etc.
- The Leaders (clergy and laity) are witnesses of the Good News.
- The Corridor Work (Personal Contact) facilitates one-to-one communication between the leaders and the Cursillistas.
- The Closing shows that Cursillo can be lasting (perennial) by sharing our Christian lives in Group Reunion and Ultreya. The Closing is simple but profound. It is where the Cursillistas become part of the Diocesan Ultreya community. The Closing is not the place to celebrate Mass.
- The Cursillistas experience a three-fold encounter: with self, Christ, and others through the method of friendship.

If the encounter with self does not happen, the other two encounters cannot occur because the Cursillista is not beginning from his true self. The encounter with self is essential so the Cursillista can see who he is, what he is like, what he wants, and whether he is directing his life where he wants. If he is sincere, he will be able to recognize and accept his possibilities and limitations. Only in the most profound and authentic encounter with self can he encounter the living, near, and normal Christ and others.

The founder emphasizes the importance of the leaders' attitude on the Cursillo Weekend. In the Structure of Ideas (p. 41), he outlines the leaders' attitude or behavior toward the Cursillistas throughout the three days.

Everything during the Cursillo has been designed to facilitate the three essential encounters.

*The First Day is To Get to Know the Cursillistas.* (Structure of Ideas, p. 41)

From the first night and through the first day until after the Piety Rollo, everything is aimed to facilitate the *encounter with oneself*. This is the reason for the silence of the first night, which continues until after Mass on the next day. It aims to make room for the truth, for the person's true self to become evident.

*The Second Day is To Understand the Cursillistas.* (Structure of Ideas, p. 41)

The second day comprises the Piety Rollo until after the Leaders' Rollo. The message is aimed at facilitating an *encounter with Christ*.

*The Third Day is To Respond to the Cursillistas* (Structure of Ideas, p. 41)

The third day comprises the Leaders Rollo to the Closing. The message is aimed at facilitating an *encounter with others*.

The three encounters are introduced to the Cursillistas through friendship. Thus, the Cursillo offers friendship: with self, Christ, and others.

### **Prayer and Palanca**

Prayer is what sustains our personal and collective relationship with God. Prayer during the Cursillo is basic, it is Pilgrims praying with Pilgrims. Let us remember that Cursillo is preferably, but not exclusively, for the faraway person. This is the reason for having a basic Pilgrim's Guide. Every person living the Cursillo will have an opportunity to build on his prayer life and spirituality during their 4th Day (Postcursillo).

Palanca and communal prayers are being offered for the success of the Cursillo. They are communicated through individual prayer at Group Reunions and/or Ultreyas. General Palanca is received from within the Cursillo Movement, from dioceses offering acts of Piety, Masses, Holy Hours, Rosaries, etc. The Rector refers to the General Palanca received for the Cursillo after the Study rollo.

During the Cursillo prayer is:

- *Explained* through the Rollos or individually.
- *Practiced* through acts of Piety.
- *Stimulated* by specifying the possibilities of prayer on the Service Sheet, which the Group Reunion will support.

### **A Witness of Friendship During the Cursillo Weekend: An Attitude**

1. A friendly relationship between the leaders, clergy, and laity is essential.
2. The proper treatment and attitude toward the Cursillistas are essential. Pay attention to details, first with the organization. Make sure everything takes place in an atmosphere of

friendship and respect for the person. Although everything is important, the most important thing for the leaders is to devote their attention to the Cursillistas.

3. The corridor work is of vital importance. Every leader should be concerned that no Cursillista leaves the Cursillo without being able to share what they need to talk about most. The leaders must aim to speak with every Cursillista during the Cursillo.

This personal dialogue and sharing of the leaders with the Cursillistas must be done based on friendship and sincerity. Only sincere friendship will offer ways for openness and dialogue.

Approach the Cursillistas with gentleness and tact in an apostolic spirit. The idea is to initiate a friendship with each person so that the Cursillistas will make friends with each other, and all will become friends with Christ.

Therefore, the lay leaders and clergy engage in personal contact with the Cursillistas during table group discussions, meals, breaks, etc. However, the leaders should refrain from being on top of the Cursillistas at *every* moment.

The **First Day** of the Cursillo allows the leaders to *Listen, Observe, and Learn*.

The first part of corridor work is referred to as “sounding.” It refers to the process of a one-to-one conversation between a team leader and a Cursillista that reveals where the person stands regarding certain realities. This “sounding” or analyzing should be done prudently, with caution, respecting and loving the person.

From the moment of departure to the venue where the Cursillo will take place until after the Piety Rollo, listen, observe, and learn. Who is the Cursillista? How is he? What are his circumstances?

What is the Cursillistas’ attitude:

- towards himself?
- towards Christ?
- towards others?
- towards the Cursillo?

The **Second Day** of the Cursillo provides an opportunity to *Understand and Prompt*.

The second part of corridor work is initially known in the Cursillo literature as “stabbing” (or “prompting”). This may be better expressed as seeking to enlighten the Cursillista. On the second day of Cursillo, we look to enlighten them so they may see clearly.

Encourage the Cursillistas to internalize the truths and the witnesses proclaimed. This means to try to have the truths become part of the Cursillistas’ life so that he makes them his own.

The intent is to help the Cursillista become aware of his possibilities and value because even though he might not know it, we know the person's value. It is the value that the Lord gives him. God made Himself a man. He lived, died, and resurrected to save us.

How should we communicate with the Cursillistas? It depends on the disposition of each Cursillista. We should make the most of any offer or invitation we sense is being made to us. With an invitation, it is okay to begin the dialogue. Even if there is an invitation, we should approach it naturally without taking things for granted but with a sense of opportunity, sensitivity, tact, and respect for their dignity.

If the Cursillista is not open, we should not force the door open. The heart and the mind are opened from the inside. The heart opens only under the light and warmth of friendship. Treating the Cursillistas with respect and friendship is necessary because they are important.

The **Third Day** of the Cursillo provides an opportunity to *Build the Bridge*. Give meaning to the Cursillistas' concerns or fears and support the plans they may have already conceived for their Fourth Day. They are worried: How will I live what I have learned? How will my family, friends, and coworkers react?

The third day is for building a bridge to the Fourth Day and the Postcursillo . . . it is *the journey outward*. The founder refers to the Cursillo Weekend as the *point of departure*. It's about understanding whether the Cursillista can or cannot attend the Ultreya. If he feels he cannot attend, we should try to specify a plan with him to continue the process of friendship. Show the Ultreya as a possibility without forcing him, only suggesting.

We should never anticipate or get ahead of the weekend's rollos. If there has been no mention of Study or Action, we must not mention the possibility of studying, knowing, or acting. If there has been no mention of the Group Reunion, avoid discussing it. If there's been no mention of the Closing, say nothing about it. If the Cursillistas show concern or have questions about something yet to come, tell them everything will come in due time. Everything is planned accordingly.

### **The Environment or Atmosphere During the Cursillo Weekend**

1. The environment or climate is progressive, moving from a fearful curiosity of the first moments of the first day to the friendship and apostolic joy of the third day.
2. The environment of each day should encourage and facilitate the spontaneity of the Cursillistas, but without being superficial.
3. The environment on the third day should be the same as the environment at the Ultreya, and the environment that is lived at the Ultreya should be the same as that of the Cursillo. If this is not the case, the Cursillistas, once they attend the Ultreya, will feel deceived. They will think I said 'yes' but not to this.

### **The Progression of the Cursillo Weekend**

The progression of the Cursillo is increasing, although the difficulty of keeping up the pace is decreasing. The progression is calculated, and every effort required from the Cursillistas must be accompanied by reason (it must be a reason that they can accept at that stage). The progression is practical and should never be a cause for discouraging their serenity and reflection.

### **The Message During the Cursillo Weekend**

The Cursillo Weekend is an apostolic plan to get closer to the person so that whoever lives the Cursillo might have an opportunity to develop or deepen their relationship with Christ.

The opportunity for encountering and establishing a relationship with self, Christ, and others is made possible through the planned methodology of the Cursillo. One aspect that helps make the three encounters possible is the sequential timeline of the rollos, the interaction between the Cursillistas and leaders, and the offer of friendship.

What is offered is not a talk (aesthetic), a lecture or presentation (intellectual), or a conference but a rollo, *a vital sharing of a life lived and experienced*. The rollista must be living the truths that are spoken about. The rollos are statements of the truth we live, want to live, or regret not living to the fullest.

The rollos are given using everyday language, understandable to everyone and in a profound way because they come from the depths of our being and because they are the truth of life. The rollos contain Kerygma (proclamation), the Gospel, and a personal witness of the life of the rollista. The aim is for the Cursillistas to accept the truth and live it in their everyday lives.

It is not about giving “my rollo.” It is about setting forth the truth that each rollo contains. The Rollo’s outline and the life of the rollista are the flesh and blood of the rollo. However, the Cursillo Weekend is not just about the rollos, just like the Movement is not only about the Cursillo Weekend.

The rollos should be prepared through prayer and study. If we give a rollo, the most important thing is to say what we live. Therefore, no PowerPoint presentations, technology, flip charts, or handouts are used during the Cursillo. All this becomes a distraction. The rollista is sharing the Gospel and his personal life, what he lives; nothing else is necessary.

A priest, deacon, or vowed religious gives the **Spiritual Rollos**. They present the theology of living a life of Grace. (Spiritual Advisor’s Guide)

A priest, deacon, or vowed religious gives the **Meditations**. These are not rollos or acts of piety but a channel toward the Cursillistas’ mental prayer. (Spiritual Advisor’s Guide)

The **Lay Rollos** given by the lay leaders present the witness to the actual living a life of Grace.

### **The Leaders and the Cursillo Weekend**

The team makeup is one leader for every five candidates<sup>1</sup>, plus the Rector, the Spiritual Advisor, and a Kitchen Team. The Cursillistas should not feel overwhelmed by the size of the team. There is no music minister or director and no Palanca team.

The leaders' mission is to be authentic, in other words, to be themselves, to show themselves the way they are, and to show the wonders that the Lord can perform in a person despite their limitations.

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<sup>1</sup> Eduardo Bonnín, An Apprentice Christian

We are not teachers; the only Teacher and Master is Jesus Christ. We do not convince anyone; it is Christ who convinces the Cursillistas. We do not want to have followers; we want the Cursillistas to follow Christ.

We offer friendship at the Cursillo because we are friends in life. However, it is not honest to offer a friendship that only lasts three days. At the Cursillo, as in life, what is important is that we are authentic and that everything we live is based on the truth.

Cursillo is about passing on only what we truly believe and live. Keep it simple. Christ (Eucharist) and his Grace must be the central focus of the Cursillo Weekend.