

Mentality

Introduction

This rollo is about the importance of understanding the mentality behind Cursillos in Christianity. Mentality refers to the underlying reason 'why' we do what we do in Cursillo. Without a clear understanding of why we do what we do, our actions can become routine or superficial. Therefore, it is crucial for every person who has freely chosen to serve Christ and his Church through the Cursillo Movement to understand the mentality behind it.

Cursillistas are well-versed in the practices of Group Reunion, Ultreya, School of Leaders, and Cursillo Weekends. However, when asked about the reasons for doing these activities, they may struggle to provide an answer. The reasoning behind these practices can be traced back to the mentality of our founder, which guides all aspects of the Cursillo movement.

During the recent World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities in Rome, the Cardinals and the Pope emphasized the importance of understanding the mentality of the founder to truly comprehend and appreciate the Cursillo Movement. They directed this message not only to the Cursillo Movement but to other movements and communities in attendance as well.

This rollo will cover some history about the founder, Eduardo Bonnín. By exploring the founder's history, we can understand his mentality and how it evolved.

In the origins of Cursillo, one can recognize the inspiration of the Holy Spirit upon the person of Eduardo Bonnín, a layman with a preeminent leadership role, who was supported by Juan Hervás, the Bishop of Mallorca, and Fr. Sebastian Gayá. A new "method" to evangelize was developed to reach those far away from God, his Church, and Christian virtues. This new method was eventually called Cursillos in Christianity Movement.

To understand the origin of the Charism of Cursillo, it is essential to delve into the mentality that the Holy Spirit instilled in Eduardo Bonnín, enabling him to recognize the gift he was receiving.

During this time, Catholicism underwent many persecutions. In addition, the Catholic families of Mallorca suffered social isolation and discrimination. They were forced to keep their religion hidden, maintaining contact only with environments and businesses associated with their families (Francisco Forteza, Cursillo History and Memory)

Eduardo was born on May 4, 1917, in Palma, Mallorca, to a Catholic family. He was one of ten children, and his family was involved in the commerce and exportation of grains and nuts. They were also committed to ensuring their children received a good education.

Eduardo obtained his education from the Augustinian Priests and La Salle College in Palma. His parents also hired teachers to educate him at home to ensure that his education aligned with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

His mother and grandfather, Jorge, instilled in Eduardo Christian fundamentals: the love of God

and the importance of “making the way” (journey) in the company of friends. This guidance became one of the primary principles in Eduardo's life and was the Holy Spirit's inspiration for Eduardo's mentality about the Charism of Cursillo.

In his youth, Eduardo was full of “Christian Spirit” and restlessness. He believed that "the message of Christ" was not presented in an inspiring or attractive manner to be fully understood and thus lived.

Eduardo was an avid reader. He sought the thinking of writers on the "crest of the wave" to deepen his study of the person and friendship. This was another inspiration from the Holy Spirit to Eduardo to continue forming his mentality.

At the age of twenty and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Eduardo joined the military service, which introduced him to life in the barracks for almost nine years. In the barracks, he met young men who frequently shared their adventures while off the military base. Their values conflicted with those Eduardo had been taught at home and had seen among the friends of his youth.

Eduardo asked himself, “Does the law weigh down these men, or do they simply ignore it?” After studying the men in the barracks, he concluded they had no idea of the Gospel or Christianity. This was another inspiration from the Holy Spirit in Eduardo's life and his work with those distant from Christ.

Another vital piece of history related to the date of Eduardo's death, February 6, 2008, is the speech given by Pope Pius XII to the parish priests of Rome. By Providence, a text from an address provided by the Pope on February 6, 1940, fell into Eduardo's hands. The Holy Father looked for “new ways,” different from the norm, so that everyone, especially those far away, may know the love of God. This address confirmed Eduardo's desire to provide a method to reach the faraway person.

The three principles that guided and shaped Eduardo's mentality are the Love of God, the Person, and Friendship.

Eduardo dedicated his entire life to living these principles and shaping the conclusions in a work he had written called the “Study of the Environment.” The study of the environment became the “birth certificate” of what would become known as the Cursillos in Christianity Movement.

Eduardo considered that the structure of the Cursillos for Advanced Pilgrim Leaders, which he attended with Catholic Action, could be helpful to give life to the principles contemplated in the Study of the Environment rollo he had written. Eduardo wanted a Cursillo that would prepare the person for life itself. He concluded that something similar could bring about the dynamics of Christianity, not only for an isolated event like the pilgrimage to St. James Cathedral at Compostela but also in the person's everyday life.

After much prayer, reflection, and looking for people willing to pray for the idea, planning, collecting, and selecting all the material accumulated on index cards, notes, and underlined

passages in books, Eduardo and his friends managed to gather a few candidates. They took the chance to plan a “new” Cursillo lasting three days, which became the first Cursillo Weekend in history.

The first Cursillo, known as the Cursillo of Cala Figuera, was held on August 19-22, 1944, in a small villa in Cala Figuera (Santanyí). There were 14 candidates. Eduardo Bonnín served as Rector and was assisted by Fr. Juan Julia, who served as Spiritual Advisor, and two Leaders, Jaime Riutord and Jose Ferragut.

Four more Cursillos were held between 1945 and 1948. Eduardo affirmed many times that since the Cursillo at Cala Figuera and the rest of the Cursillo Weekends, he continued to use the same outlines and writings, that proved they were authentic Cursillos. The Cursillo Weekends were numbered, starting with the #1 Cursillo held in San Honorato on January 7-10, 1949.

The founder introduced Cursillo to the five continents, and it is now a worldwide movement recognized by the hierarchy.

Eduardo was, as he said, an “Apprentice Christian” who dedicated his life to the proclamation of God's love, valuing people, and friendship, especially with those who were distant or far away from Christ, his Church, and Christianity.

Eduardo passed away on Ash Wednesday, February 6, 2008. He is buried in the atrium of the Capuchin Church in Palma, Mallorca, and his headstone is engraved with the words he always used to describe himself: “Eduardo Bonnín, An Apprentice Christian.” The church served as the chapel for the prison, where Eduardo went to visit the prisoners every week. In February 1949, Eduardo and his friend Andrés went to accompany two prisoners condemned to death. Their visit encouraged the two prisoners to go to confession before dying the following day.

Cursillo is based on *what is fundamental to being Christian*, and what is fundamental is based on a single idea: God loves us. This is a great truth that Cursillo emphasizes, which is also the message of the Gospel.

St. Augustine reminds us: “*God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.*” God loves us for our uniqueness, originality, and creativity. Therefore, in Cursillo, we do not begin from the notion that we love God but from the certainty that God loved us first.

God loves us because He created us in His image and likeness. This is the love we see on the Cross. John tells us that God’s love cannot be limited because it is boundless and encompasses all creation (John 3:16). His love is not limited to a single nation or a few chosen friends. His love is infinite because it embraces everyone created in “His image and likeness.”

When we incorporate the truth that God loves us, when we make room within us for love, and when we live aware of that love:

- a) that is when our life becomes meaningful, and the best of ourselves springs forth, which is Christ himself.
- b) the person is complete because nothing is taken away from him. On the contrary, his entire

personality is empowered by freedom and, therefore, radiates JOY.

The great discovery of the Cursillo Weekend is that our first step should be the encounter with ourselves. Only by looking at ourselves and watching the movie of our life can we gradually discover the gaps where we moved away from God and begin to fill them with His presence to shape our personality and complete our being! We must take the risk of being ourselves!

What were the elements on which the mentality was formed?

The founder said that the mentality of the Cursillo Movement was nothing more and nothing less than the same mentality of what is fundamental to being Christian.

This can be expressed in capturing, understanding, believing, appreciating, living, and sharing the love and friendship of Christ.

- a. We must **capture** the best news of the best reality that God in Christ loves us and wants to be our friend.
- b. We must **understand** that this reality is not something invented by Cursillo but rather a reality that existed from the day of our baptism, which Cursillo shows as a tangible reality in our lives.
- c. We must **believe** that Christ invites us into a relationship of love and friendship.
- d. We must **appreciate** that Christ invites us into a relationship in a very personal way.
- e. We must **live and share Christ's love and his friendship** with everyone around us through a living of what is fundamental to being Christian.

And all of this, from an objective approach, means putting into practice the Gospel and common sense! From a subjective viewpoint, it is Faith and the Person.

[Note for the Rollista: *Objectivity* - the ability to perceive or describe something without being influenced by personal emotions or prejudices. *Subjectivity* - interpretation based on personal opinions or feelings rather than on external facts or evidence.]

The Mentality of the Cursillo Movement is based on these four Pillars: The Gospel, Common Sense, Faith, and the Person.

The Gospel

The book "Structure of Ideas" tells us that Cursillos in Christianity, does nothing more than discover and put into practice the fact that theology (the study of God) and psychology (the study of the person) are authentically parallel. The best reality of God is far beyond the best aspirations of the person. Later in the book, we are also shown the absolute values of God and the values of the person, on a series of charts. This part is interesting and should be studied in the School of Leaders.

Therefore, to put the mentality of the Cursillo Movement into practice, two essential elements are needed: the Gospel and common sense.

The Gospel is not about carrying it under the arm, nor to be read, but rather, to be lived and shared

in the natural and everyday realities of our lives.

The founder tells us that: *“the Gospel is what centers us on the reality of what is really real,”* which means the Gospel shows us the way and helps us see reality.

The Gospel makes it possible for us to see clearly who we are called to be, and at the same time, it teaches us that it serves in our lives, not so much to stand out, but to stand firm.

The Gospel gives foundation to everything that is true and updates us constantly. The Gospel makes us see clearly not only that we should love God, our neighbor, and ourselves, but, more importantly, that God loves us.

The greatest, most radical, and complete gift in the world is that God loves you and me in a very particular and personal way.

By living the Gospel, we come to know that Christ does not force us, nor does he tell us what we should do, but rather, that he gives us His love and friendship so that we might desire to pursue what is good and do what is good.

And this is because the Gospel is the life of God flooding and enveloping human life with positive and visible results. Something else we need to consider is that by means of the Gospel, we can come to realize that all who are baptized, are called to be, as St. Francis would say, *“an instrument of Christ’s love.”*

We completely forget that the person, being God’s most incredible creation in the world, is still and will continue to be an essential instrument for Cursillo and the Church. Without the person, we would not have Christians; we would not have a Church, and much less, a Cursillo Movement.

Common Sense

Common Sense is sometimes referred to as the least common of the senses. Common sense helps us to put all things in a totally human perspective. In other words, common sense is what helps us to do everything naturally.

And when the person lives and shares the Gospel, there are certain things that common sense implies:

- a. It implies that the person has the **capacity to be amazed**. A readiness to admire the things of God, a readiness to admit that He does great things. When the person has the capacity to be amazed, not only do great things cause wonder, but also the small things in life that surround us. It is through this amazement and admiration that we constantly learn, are inspired, develop, and grow.
- b. Common sense implies a **sense of humor**. This is the capacity to laugh at ourselves and our mistakes before anyone else. This way, the joke doesn’t hurt us as much. We must continue to smile and transmit the joy of living in Christ; otherwise, how will we convince and evangelize the person? If we complain about the meetings we need to attend and all the work we need to accomplish in Cursillo, how is this going to motivate anyone to attend a Cursillo Weekend or serve in the Movement?

- c. A consequence of common sense is the **capacity to endure**. The capacity to have patience, understanding, and admiration when, for example, someone tells us something that for them is important, and even though they have repeated themselves several times, we can still enjoy what they are saying with the same enthusiasm they project as though you are hearing it for the first time.
- d. Common sense implies a **capacity to be creative**. This is mentioned in the Leaders rollo; “we are all unique, and even though we cannot do everything, we all can do something.” We have different talents, strengths, and possibilities. We need to help the person discover their creativity so that they can continue to grow.
- e. And finally, common sense implies a **capacity for friendship**. We cannot afford to miss a single opportunity to make friends and make them friends with Christ. The message of Cursillo that “God loves us” is transmitted in all the phases of its method: Precursillo, Cursillo Weekend, and Postcursillo, and we transmit this love through the best means, which is friendship.

Christ communicated the love of the Father through friendship. Christ came to restore friendship between humanity and the Father. Christ told the disciples, “I have called you friends, for all the things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” (John 16:15)

Therefore, the Gospel and Common Sense are the two objective aims of Mentality that Cursillo seeks. On a subjective level, there is Faith and the Person.

Faith

Faith is not only believing in what we do not see or understand but rather giving a Christian perspective to everything we see and everything that is happening around us.

Christ needs to be our guide, our light, and our way. And as Pope Benedict XVI told us at the official beginning of his Pontificate, “*He who believes will never be alone.*”

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, in one of his Wednesday audiences, stated that St. Bernard’s concept of true knowledge of God consists in a “personal, profound experience of Jesus Christ and of his love.” “*Faith is, above all, a personal, intimate encounter with Jesus, and to experience his closeness, his friendship, his love; only in this way does one learn to know him ever more, and to love and follow him evermore. May this happen to each one of us.*” (October 21, 2009)

The Person

Cursillo seeks a person with the capacity for conviction, determination, and perseverance, and that their conviction and decisions be entirely focused on Christ.

When this happens, our constancy takes on a dimension in our life.

For this, Cursillo supposes:

- that we accept ourselves,
- that we realize that we can be more,
- and that we understand that we can be better.

This means:

- we should believe in the person, in their values, their talents, their capacity, and their dignity as a person.
- this also means respecting the person, not for what they have or can give us, but for being a person, a brother or sister in Christ.
- and this means facilitating their total freedom in all places and circumstances.
- and that the person be filled with the friendship and love of Christ so that with this knowledge and conviction, they share it in their environment.
- that the person be motivated to respond to the commission received in baptism.
- Baptism gives us the opportunity to be saints, that is, people living in a conscious and progressive state of grace, people who maintain a constant relationship with Christ and a vital communication with their brothers and sisters.
- the same baptism, which calls us to be apostles by living the redeeming life of Christ within ourselves and surrendering all we have so that Christ may live in others.
- and the same baptism, which calls us to be men and women with personality.
- men and women who encounter Christ become convinced of the greatness of the virtues of love and friendship and the opportunity they have to share it with others.

In relation to this, Cursillo intends that these men and women love God, love friendship, and love being a person and realize that God exists, that God insists, and that God assists.

- God **exists**, and he is fully alive, near, and present. He loves us and offers us his friendship.
- God **insists** because he is in the heart and mind of each person, and he is constantly offering us his love and friendship.
- And God **assists** because He promised He is present where two or three are gathered in His name.

Being Christian is not for giving an account but rather, to take into account the beauty of being Christian. Christ offers his love and friendship in a simple manner, and because of this simplicity, it is sometimes difficult to understand.

This relationship of love and friendship with Christ means that we live and share it in whatever environment we find ourselves in. We need to understand that the environment is not the structure but rather whatever place we have human interaction.

We cannot limit this living and sharing of love and friendship to our School of Leaders, Group Reunion, and Ultreyas. Although these are important, God needs us out in the world, in the streets, in our family, our workplace, with our acquaintances, and with those who surround us at this exact moment.

Our founder realized that what the world needed was not more Church people but rather a Church of people so that the Church would be present in all the realities of the world. This vision helped him develop a method that would give knowledge, conviction, and a sharing of what is fundamental to being Christian.

- Knowledge — God, in Jesus Christ, loves us!
- Conviction — total conviction of Christ's love — because you can only be effective with what you are convinced of and only when it has become part of your life.
- Sharing of what is fundamental to being Christian because our living is incomplete when

there is no sharing. Because the mentality and purpose of Cursillo seeks nothing more than the living and sharing of what St. Paul called the triple love — love of God, love of neighbor, and love of ourselves.

We should realize that Cursillo does not seek to make Christians. A Christian is made at baptism. Cursillo simply seeks to bring awareness and facilitate a complete living experience and sharing of our baptism. As Christians, we must be aware of our divine inheritance, our dignity, and the privilege of being a person, children of God, and active members of His holy Church.

In Closing

Objectively the mentality of Cursillo is the Gospel and common sense. And subjectively, it is faith and the person.

Cursillos in Christianity consist of a living proclamation of the best news of the best reality: that God, in Christ, loves us; communicated by the best means; which is friendship; and directed towards the best of each one; which is the person and his capacity of conviction, decision, and constancy.

The Mentality of the Cursillo Movement is based on and lived through these four Pillars: The Gospel, Common Sense, Faith, and the Person.

This is how the founder felt we could face life, our life, and the lives of others with a mentality that could be totally Christian. This was a mentality that would be reasoned, maintained, and contagious.