



AN INTERVIEW BY HIS EXCELLENCY AND REVEREND PAUL JOSEF CORDES WITH MR. EDUARDO BONNIN

INTRODUCTION

This is Chapter III of the 1st Part, Interviews with founder and leaders of the movements, from the book *“Signs of Hope – Portrait of Seven Ecclesial Movements”* by [Bishop] Paul Josef Cordes, ISBN: 84-285-2112-3, San Pablo 1998)

EDUARDO BONNÍN

Founder of the Cursillos in Christianity Movement

1. Can you tell us briefly about yourself and your spiritual growth? What kind of environment did you grow up in and what type of formation did you receive?

I believe very sincerely that the Lord, using many circumstances, has manifested his will, little by little, throughout my life.

I am a convinced providentialist and I see that I have almost never obtained any of the objectives I had proposed for myself in my youth. But the Lord has shown me in many circumstances, if not all of them that he has better taste than I do and has led me on different paths.

The environment into which I was born and grew up has certainly been one of the most precious gifts that God has given me.

In my family we were ten children, three boys and seven girls. One of my brothers is a diocesan priest and one sister, now deceased, was a disalced Carmelite nun in Valencia.

Because of my age during the Spanish Civil War and World War 2, my military service lasted nine years. Before that, my schooling took place at St. John the Baptist La Salle College and at the Augustinian Father's College.

I am convinced that nothing influenced me more than my obstinate and ever-growing interest in reading. Already when I was very young, I had the habit of saying that I would rather go a day without eating than a day without reading. I spent any money that was at my disposal on books.



2. When you were a young man, what importance did faith have in your life?

Very much. In my humble opinion, when faith is Christian it is so because it is evangelical and it is evangelical because it is Christian. Faith illuminates, clarifies and directs situations, sometimes very complicated ones, of ordinary life toward God and His Church.

3. How did you feel about the problem of God?

It never has occurred to me that God is a problem, but rather the answer (definitively: the answer) that is sure, efficacious, and complete for all the difficulties that have presented themselves and that can present themselves to man now and always.

I have been able to experience that when a person has faith, he has confidence, believes, trusts and has confidence in the most amazing and profound and perhaps most incomprehensible and most difficult thing to understand and know; that God in Christ, loves us, loves me. Everything else is given to him abundantly for good measure.

I sincerely believe that sometimes, with the best of intentions, we mistakenly believe that God became man and entered history in order to save the world. I humbly confess that I do not believe this was his idea but rather that he became incarnate and came into the world to save man, not the world, so that man can be happy through his faith in him.

In my life I have seen people who, lacking everything, are very happy and others who, having everything, die of boredom.

All of this helps me to better understand why God says that His kingdom is not of this world and why He puts it where it is, where He wants to be, and where it pleases Him to stay. This is to say, in the interior space of each person, in his intelligence and in his heart so that through union with Him, by grace, he can conquer his egoism, pride and ambition and so that each day his conviction, his decision and constancy can be more Christian.

Indeed, I am convinced that even if God's kingdom is not of this world it is the only one that can give meaning and fullness to the kingdoms of this world.

4. Did you experience a strong intervention from God in your life since your youth which is significant in its development thereafter?

I have always found my way of thinking reflected in the prayer of petition that from the very beginning we make to God in the "Apostolic Hour." "Lord, grant that we not need miracles in order to believe and act but give us such a faith that we deserve that you grant them to us."

I am more impressed by the silence of God and his capacity to bear so much than by the miracles and apparitions because the truth usually comes to us through people who in appearance, and only in appearance, are farther away from the transparency of the Father and the perennial freshness of the Beatitudes.



5. The Charism of the Cursillo is tied to the history of its Founder. The Movement was born at a precise historical moment that was presenting particular needs to which you gave a response. In the light of your personal history, what were the first steps that contributed to the birth of the Movement?

I once read a quotation from Ellermeier in a book of the Prophets by Alfonso Schökel and Sicre Diaz that stated, “A historical phenomena can only be properly understood when light is shone on its beginnings.”

Very well, what we could name as “the beginning” of everything, happened like this. When I left for my military service in 1938, I realized that the world was very different from the concept that I had of it. In that environment the values that were appreciated were opposite from those that I had lived in my family. This made me think, “Are these people the way they are because they find the law burdensome or because they are ignorant of the doctrine?” I was convinced, by my observation of these people, that they were not so much burdened by the law but by the ignorance of the doctrine.

From that moment on my almost sole concern was to understand, as much as possible, the fundamental core essential to the doctrine—the most important part to the Christian message—And what the Christian authors were saying about it that in my opinion were explaining it the best or most clearly. I read St Augustine, St Theresa, and St John of the Cross...

I was also interested in learning about the person towards whom the message is directed. Amongst many authors, I read Dante, Cervantes, Baltasar, Gracian, etc.

Although the down time during my military service was almost endless, the time that I had available obliged me to give priority to certain books, when I could read, that in my judgment could be the most effective. And these were the authors who were then the cream of the crop: Hugo and Karl Rahner, Romano Guardini, Father Plus, Cardinal Mercier, Cardinal Suenens, Tristan Amoroso Lima, etc. and the psychologists: Carl Rogers, Maslow...

But I felt then and now that the Gospel is what best synthesizes and summarizes best the doctrine. In other words, Jesus’ message that is first and foremost news for man and therefore restlessness and a desire to know of Him and that the incredible possibility of becoming His friend, by means of the life experience of grace, awakens and empowers the best of each person in their innermost being.

My primary interest was to make progress in the knowledge of Christ and in the knowledge of man as a person, and hence his capacity for conviction, determination and constancy.

The following books helped me with regards to the first of these: *‘Life Abundant,’* Arami, *‘Soul of the Apostolate,’* Chautard, *‘The Glories of Divine Grace,’* M.J Scheeben.

For the second, to come to a better understanding of men, I read : *‘Les puissances de je,’* Louis Lavelle, [Power of the Ego], *‘We Have Been Friends Together’* Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, and later, *‘In terra extrana,’* [In a Foreign Land] by Lili Alvarez.



6. Interviewer. -That's a lot of important texts but there must have been something more ...

All this, and mostly my contact with people made me realize, live and in person, that when the message of the Gospel is accepted with personalized faith and it reaches the uniqueness, originality and creativity of each person, it empowers their human qualities. As man becomes conscious and grows in his life of grace he begins Christologically--meaning the logic that Christ usually uses—to grow in his desire to live and give thanks for the gift of life and to experience the joy that results from transmitting it to the greatest number possible.

The Cursillo Movement, by the Grace of God and the prayers of many, was born of real concern for concrete, normal and ordinary people found in daily life that are burdened by the simple fact of having to live and being able to keep living and who rarely have time to ask themselves why they live and even less to be concerned or worried about the meaning of their own existence.

What we wanted at the beginning and still continue to want, is that the freedom of man encounter the Spirit of God.

Everything was centered on this idea and we were convinced that most of its efficacy consisted in finding the manner to facilitate this happy encounter.

At first by myself and later with some others, we set out to study what would be the place and the most adequate manner to achieve our objective rapidly, simply, swiftly and in an attractive manner.

At that time the superior council for young men of Catholic Action was invited by its national president, Manuel Aparici - who later became a priest and chaplain of the same council - to convoke 100,000 young people, willing to live in the Grace of God, at St. James of Compostela. This was in answer to what Pius XI had stressed in 1937 in his encyclical "With Burning Desire", regarding the situation of the Church in the German Reich. In it he stated that the world needed a Christianity founded on solid Christian virtues which would become an example and a guide.

A delegation of youth from Catholic Action went to Rome to promise the Holy Father that Spain would be whom would offer that Christianity the pope desired.

For this reason, they would use the holidays during Christmas and Easter to go to many dioceses to offer Cursillos that lasted a full week. When they were for the diocese they were called "Advanced Pilgrims" [Adelantados de Peregrinos], and yet for the parish they were called "Pilgrim Guides" [Jefes de Peregrinos], at the parochial level. The intended goal was to motivate young people with the ideal of the pilgrimage to St. James. In those years the following slogans became very famous: 'Saints in Santiago', 'to make the pilgrimage is nothing, to make a pilgrimage with faith is to make a path'.

When the first of these cursillos took place in Mallorca I didn't want to go, in spite of being invited. In fact, I did not belong to Catholic Action and their manner of being and acting did not motivate me to join.

When the second cursillo of this type was given the following year, the president insisted that I go, and I went. I then saw a relaxed and joyful style and manner of working in these young men that convinced me.

And so, sometime after, when another cursillo like the previous ones was again celebrated in Mallorca, I was invited to participate in it. But, that time the outline of the 'Study of the Environment' volume and some other things were added on. It was clear that a perspective was developing that was different from what preceded.

I could not free myself from being preoccupied with what would happen after the great pilgrimage and along with some friends we kept asking, "And after Santiago, what will happen?" We got the idea from those Cursillos that in order for them to listen to us, to communicate our ideas (not of those Cursillos, that, as I stated, functioned in a different way and had a very specifically different goal) we needed something other than talks and explanations and instead interacting with those we wanted to infect, gather them in an isolated place and form groups to facilitate the dialogue and participation amongst all. We also took the topics of some of the conversations from those cursillos because we could not create other ones and we had to adapt ourselves exactly to its rhythm while at the same time studying how to animate them and make them more lively.

7. Therefore you gave worth to the concept of the courses already organized by Catholic Action. But it is evident, with the new things that you added, that you were pursuing something new-

We were sure of one thing: that those cursillos lasted too long to the detriment of the number of people who could receive the message. We thought that a period of three days would be ideal and if these three days included Saturday and Sunday, it would be simple to take one day off, Friday. Since the Cursillo begins on Thursday night, it became easy to gather a group for a weekend; this way the message could reach a greater number of people. What was most interesting for us was to fully study the ideas that were the basis and heart of the message in question, in order to communicate it a way that was swift, whole, profound, solid and attractive to the greatest number of people.

This is how by reflecting, praying, studying, and praying again, our Cursillos in Christianity Movement was conceived, born and developed. At first they were simply called Cursillos, but afterwards, in order to distinguish them from all the courses existing at the time - courses for professors, for policemen, etc. - later, not us but others called them "Cursillos for Conquest." This was absolutely displeasing to the ones who gave the ideas for them to begin.

The prayer that we said at the beginning or when the tension in the debates required it, gives an idea of the climate that emanated from these meetings. At that time, I already belonged to Catholic Action, but I did not like the apathetic routine and pious rhythm that we had to give to all our activities so they wouldn't be considered inopportune.

We were moving with a different rhythm in a different direction, always concerned, more than anything else, with the far away. In order to avoid tensions with Catholic Action and not oppose them we kept ourselves on the fringes but with a desire to improve it. We realized that we had to maintain a good distance so that we could observe things from another perspective. To this end we gathered to study as faithfully and deeply as we could the ideas that we wanted to communicate and the concrete situations of the people we wanted to communicate them in the most personal manner.

Before all else we delved as a group into the study of the environment.

I contributed what I had been working on for a long time. We wanted before all else to reflect on how people are; we mentally categorized them into groups, beginning with Christians who are coherent, authentic, practical, who think and act as Catholics and ending with intellectual atheists. We even made some file cards, always imaginary, but still taken from real life. For example, the "young soldier": "who obeys to his superiors face because he has no other option, but grumbles and mutters behind his back because he has had enough".

No priests assisted at these meetings, not from a deliberate attempt to exclude them but because their multiple tasks rendered their presence difficult. Besides that, we felt that the novelty of our ideas, especially before they were well structured, could be disturbing to their traditional mentality, which was rooted in their way of working that came from their ministerial practice.

Some picturesque anecdotes from this time would shed light on our intentions.

When we were saying that Cursillo should be heterogeneous, gathering all kinds of people to the adventure: people that are near and those that are far away, wealthy and poor, the intelligent and the ignorant, the workers and the 'white collar', students and manual workers, etc., we were told that a student and a farmhand would never be interested in the same things.

Our position was difficult in certain sense because we had to adopt an understanding attitude with the recently converted when their enthusiastic and irrepressible spirit was an affront to the frozen rigidity of norm. For example, when they came at an impossible hour - the only one possible for them after their work - to ask a priest to say the apostolic hour in the church, the answer was clear and categorical: "We can't open the church at this hour". From their point of view, the priest was completely right but we had to use precious time, running against the clock, because we were always trying to get the parish priests to understand the mentality of these young, recent converts and to make sure that what was happening wouldn't give a reason to develop instinctual prejudices against the clergy.

The spirit of the Cursillo is nothing other than the substance of the gospel brought to the reality of many lives. Now, just as before, if the cursillo is not forcibly suffocated by norms and bureaucratic procedures it oftentimes bursts in the person with an effervescent momentum that has not always been easy to curb, but that has all the force of a bursting generosity that is impressive.

One of the things for which we have to thank God is the union of the role of the priest and of the laity in the three days of the cursillo. In it, if it develops properly, the priest will feel more like a priest and, more than understanding, he lives that happy expression of Saint Augustine: "With you I am a Christian, for you I am a bishop."

On the other hand, the cursillo lays bare and discovers human values in the laity who, if they are assisted in being Christians in the world rather than directing them to solve intra-ecclesial problems, they would increase the prestige of the Church and bring it closer to the world.

It is necessary to recognize the trust that some priests gave us by letting us act with freedom. Freedom that required exploring and traveling new paths with the desire to discover the most suitable for us, to communicate the most beautiful news that, in some way, break the mold and overcomes the weariness of customs with the ever-new vigor of what is evangelical.

It goes without saying that all "beginnings" also create problems. We went through hard times; in the movement we had experiences that today still provoke pain in me and hurt my sense of justice.

8. God has always raised diverse charisms in the Church.

It has always seemed evident to me that God never abandons his Church and that his infinite providence provides, throughout history, that the love he has for man be manifested in some way.

The means that God normally uses to reach man's conscience and to awaken him to the incredible but possible friendship with Him, is always diverse and changes even from person to person.

Sometimes the vehicle to get the person's attention and intention is someone else, or perhaps an event, an idea, a community, an institution, a behavior.

9. What is a charism for you?

I firmly believe, and I have been able to verify what theology says: "A charism is a gift that God gives to whom he wants, but not for the recipient who receives it, but for the benefit of the whole community and the Church".

10. A charism operates within the Church.

Feeling Christian and not feeling Church seems to me a contradiction; it means ignoring what is being a Christian and what the Church is. But it is a very frequent contradiction because the message of Christ reaches many people only and exclusively through some rigid and demanding moral precepts. Separated from their reason and truth, these precepts seem absurd and the notion of Church thus appears restricted and distorted; for many it is formed only by some gentlemen who live light years from the reality of everyday life and use a language that makes communication very difficult, not to say dialogue.

11. How have you lived and what is your relationship with the ecclesial structure and with the pope, who has the task to discern charisms?

In my modest understanding, it is the ecclesial structure that has the task of discerning, supporting and not stifle initiatives and ideas.

With regard to this I have had the great pleasure to read: "The judgment on the authenticity of a charism and its reasonable exercise corresponds to those who have authority in the Church, to those to whom it corresponds, above all, the duty not to suffocate the Spirit, but rather to examine everything and keep what is good".

The Cursillo Movement is a Church movement, but not for the Church, but for the world, like the Church herself. Since it belongs to the Church, it needs priests and lay people, but the one and the other, in addition to keeping in dialogue, must be faithful and not detach themselves from the "initial charism". Also, strange things, especially legal matters, have always been given more importance, as well as the ideas of those who mostly give the impression of seeking protagonism more than they do serious and deep study of why and for whom.

I think I have explained that I have always wanted to be a son of the Church; but I see that in history it is often repeated that when someone breaks ancestral customs, others always arise who are dedicated to persecuting him or trying to discredit him. I think it's fair that the role of discerning correspond to the hierarchy. In my understanding, new ideas can either be brief sparks or flames that illuminate the panorama. Sometimes innovators - I should have personally experienced this statement - adopt an attitude similar to that assumed by Jesus' disciples when the Samaritans did not want to welcome him. "Lord, shall we bring down fire!". I have often thought that the Lord might rejoice in the determination and vehemence of the disciples' request, but nothing disturbed his serene attitude, and it did not rain fire. I think all the initiatives and concerns that, thank God, almost overflow in so many places, certainly need the judgment of the hierarchy, so that reflection and reason can appease the impetus and temper the spirits. But I find it strange that the way to arrive at this is so complicated.

As for the cursillos, the dialogue was never possible, and the initiators were never welcomed. I must confess that sometimes I lie by speaking in the plural, but the singular annoys me so much. In the best analysis, it is my fault for having adopted the easy solution of not speaking truths I lived; but I have not done it to choose the easiest path, but for having experienced in the flesh, countless times, that more importance was given to obedience than to the truth, and my interest was that the cursillos continue despite everything.

12. Can you tell us how your charism is concretely configured? How is it expressed in people who are part of your movement?

First of all I must say that I don't like this "YOUR" in the question. I think everything that the movement has obtained and is obtaining in the world is due to the fact that the Holy Spirit is its author.

In my opinion, the charism has been configured over time through the reception that it has been given each time; the people who take part, with the necessary disposition, understand the simplicity of the message in the three days of the cursillo and try to translate it into the reality of their life each day. What they have learned in the cursillo, at the individual level, they consolidate and they confirm at the "group reunion" and, on a social level, by attending the "ultreya".

Both things are directed to the careful attention of the dynamics of conversion, by means of the cohesive strength of friendship, which not only brings people together, but makes them feel actively part and parcel in the daily life of the small group that creates and maintains, even in small things, a closeness of hearts, in such a manner that everyone can express himself in front of the others as he is.

The lively and interested connection to these acts makes it easier for the person to make an effort to carry on in life the three things that are asked of them on the first day of the cursillo: their dream, their gift and their spirit of charity.

All this is lived afterwards in a climate of great fraternity, which is expressed in a language and in a joyously natural and sincere style, very different from what devout people generally live.

Every person who has lived the experience of the cursillo leaves it with the conviction that God in Christ loves them.

The person knows that being Christians, more than anything else, is feeling loved by God and living in this stupor, because the most genuinely Christian element is letting oneself be loved by God.

The inner attitude generated by this reality, when it is truly believed and lived in fullness, grows and becomes contagious. But in order to grasp it, to experience it, to encounter God who is love, as He is, we must try to present ourselves before Him as we are.

13. The gospel is usually thought of as something for experts. Who is your charism for? Why do lay and consecrated people live it together?

The end of the Cursillo Movement has been, from the beginning, to spread the Good News of the Gospel to all men and women of the world without distinction. The charism of the Cursillos in Christianity is for everyone; in our internal language we usually say that if the people we call "locomotives" go, then the "train wagons" can also go.

Where and when the charism of the cursillo has been felt by priests and laity there has always been a fruitful union for each other. The living and pressing concern that everyone who is called to the cursillos can know and live in the grace of God nurtures the sincere friendship and eliminates many prejudices and misunderstandings.

The most unique thing about the cursillos is that they are followed by people of all kinds and that they only explain the essential, what we call "the fundamental Christian life."

Always abiding in reality and trying to aim to the singularity, originality and personal and real creativity of each person.

Operating so that the person, once realizing the good and the bad they can obtain from discovering and exercising their own freedom, does not find themselves alone, but with the Spirit of God.

Specifying and explaining the path of esteem that money devalues and prostitutes.

Valuing what is really worth its value because its value never changes, in other words, that which is of value based according to the values of the gospel.

Communicating to as many people as possible the good news that God loves us, expressed by the best means, friendship, toward the best of each person, their uniqueness, their capacity for conviction, decision and constancy. Knowing that the triple encounter that takes place during the cursillo, with themselves, with Christ and with their brothers and sisters, is transforming into friendship, in friendship with themselves, with Christ and with their brothers and sisters.

This, with fidelity to grace, offers us a Christian criterion that makes a precise orientation easier and safer, offers us the necessary clarity and constant encouragement to resolve any problem in God's light.

Therefore, it is understood little by little that Christ has come into the world to bring us true happiness, simplifying the way and giving us the necessary means. And we experience that, with Christ in us, lived through grace, we can be troubled and feel good. We are called to make God's tenderness transparent.

14. How do you judge your relationship with God today?

My relationship with God is manifested in my deep and sincere friendship with marginalized people, especially prisoners, drug addicts and alcoholics; I have never taught them anything, but I try to take advantage of what I can learn. Many of them are teachers by virtue of knowing how to hope, others have known how to forgive unimaginable offenses, others hope against all hope and many, even with bleeding hearts, give precedence to the possibility of providing joy to others, trying to sweeten their bitter life.

I think this contact, which I have tried to make with tact, without paternalism, but with fraternal and friendly closeness, has brought me very close to God, to prayer, to the sacraments, to a living relationship with Him, in his Church.

15. How does God meet you on your way?

Today, as yesterday and as always, I see or, better, I experience the relationship with God through the gift that makes me able to live in his grace, which I try to make conscious and revive with prayer and the frequency of the sacraments.

It has always seemed strange and difficult for me to understand that new motivations should be sought for every time and even place to push people to the love of Christ.

I honestly believe that if supreme motivation were given precedence - that is, if people came to grasp the wonderful reality of God's love for them, and if everything was carried out along this line, delving, studying and making the means explicit - much more would be obtained from each one, and every Christian, instead of making his surrounding more "religious", would obtain the Christianization of the hearts and minds of many people.

The idea of using animators to move Christian communities has always seemed curious to me. I think if these energies were used so that each one could find himself and discover his qualities, it would simplify the path to learn to give thanks for them and they would be in a position to accept even their own limits with optimism.

This is the best way for each person to be able to, based on the response they give to the supreme truth of God's love for her in Christ, have and count on a Christian criterion with which to discern any event in light of the gospel.

We can be certain we love, that we are loved we have faith. He who loves doubts everything, he who

feels loved does not doubt anything. When a person experiences this reality and the faith of being loved by God in Christ becomes the motor, orientation and goal of his life, then he understands that being a Christian is not only knowing that one day we will be accountable, but it is to live realizing he is living, and this impels him to give thanks to God. If we face life with this attitude, then we realize that life is beautiful, that people are important, and that life is worth living.

16. Then it is essential to lean on the gospel ...

For me, the gospel is always safe guidance, clarifying light and constant encouragement in all the situations of life.

My goal has always been to be able to recite the Lord's Prayer every day with truth.

17. What does it mean to evangelize today?

In my opinion it means what it meant yesterday and it will mean tomorrow. The gospel does not change, it is we who must change. The gospel is always new and it renews us. It is the means to live it that are changing. I see that the difficulty at present comes from the fact that man prefers what is immediate more than what is true, but this happens because the whole world is organized to prevent man from thinking, or having time to think, in order to manipulate him and to propose whatever to him, so long as he doesn't exercise his being a man.

To evangelize this man it is not enough to speak to him about the Gospel, but rather, it is necessary to put him in conditions that permit him to grasp Christ's message, so that in the midst of the complications of life, he is able to discover that the Gospel gives the right orientation for using his freedom and to be happier. It is a light by which to find the precise balance that gives interior peace and constant encouragement to interpret the events of life, good and bad, in the light of faith.

18. Finally, what reflection does your charism have in the modern world?

Although it is not evident, I do not want to doubt the good intentions of those who have always tried to exploit the personal generosity of the new converts, orienting it, not towards the world where they live or where they are, but towards ecclesiastical commitments. From teaching catechism to visiting the elderly, there are a whole range of activities that need generous people; what better than to resort to the "cursillistas"? This makes them find satisfaction in what they do, they feel satisfied, fulfilled, and thus the dynamics of their conversion, which should be continual, withdraws into itself, satisfied with the good done.

We are convinced that if instead, the Cursillista were oriented towards the world, towards his world, towards the environment where he lives, to live it as a Christian with naturalness, spontaneity and joy, it would be very diverse and more efficacious.

Instead the opposite has almost always been done: the "cursillista" has been assigned to "Cáritas", to catechesis, the parish choir, etc. All this leads, with a certain and almost exasperating regularity, to the following alternative: if he is very clever, he is not very holy; if he is very holy and says yes to everyone, he can say goodbye to his wife, children, coworkers and friends, because he will hardly have time for them. Maybe this way he will become very holy, but in my modest understanding, not as the world and the Church today need him.

This being the case, those who were in the world of culture, politics, economy and social life itself, have been uprooted from where God had planted them and transplanted to a more pious place. When any of them thinks of something, as soon as they have their ideas and personality, they are told to pray; I don't want to think that this is said because he who prays does not give trouble or because a priest is

more comfortable with twenty obedient people than with one who has his own ideas with Christian and Evangelical substance, capable of being, personally living in grace, light, salt and ferment among his colleagues and friends, influencing efficaciously in their own environment.

I can't help but think that if culture, politics, economics and social life cannot count on people who are truly Christian with conviction, determination and constancy, then we will not go very far. This does not mean that the only way to achieve this is through cursillos, but that it is also true that where they have been used according to their purpose, they have achieved the end that has captivated us from the beginning and continues to captivate us. We say it with an expression by Father Beda Bernegger: "If Christianity is able to demonstrate externally that it can unite people from different social classes, the teacher and craftsman, public employee and worker, business woman and housewife, in the same family spirit, the very force of this same thing will become an irresistible impulse and transform into the best instrument for the apostolate".

19. What is your relationship with someone who has no faith or who belongs to another religion or another Christian creed?

Optimal, better than with the usual Christians, who believe - I want to assume it is in good faith - that they have already arrived and they are convinced that religious practices are a goal and not a way to get there. Those who find it hard to believe that a Christian has to convert a little every day. And that everything that refers to God is better understood knowing how to believe than believing we know.

One thing I just cannot thank God for enough, and certainly one of the most beautiful gifts he has given me, is having been repeatedly invited by our Protestant brothers of the United States. Our separated brothers, whom I would call our desired brothers. They have invited me several times, and I have always accepted, in order to explain to them what it is and what our Cursillo Movement wants. Every time there has been a warm and fruitful interaction that has done good for all. I have been able to speak freely, noting a big difference from "high-level" OMCC meetings, where they have never listened to us and where norms are communicated according to a different line from what us founders have always wanted and continue to want.

20. What are the challenges of the Church today?

I have asked myself many times what the world needs most today: Church persons or a Church of persons. But persons who are really such, men and women capable of conviction, decision, and perseverance.

There was a time when it seemed that human things should be used to protect the divine. Today we find that solely divine realities, made real in the people who accept them with conviction and carry them out with decision and perseverance, can give the right judgment so that scientific and technical discoveries have the human dimension necessary to contribute to true progress in which all men feel like brothers.

I sincerely believe that the only institution that has all the necessary requirements to be a safe, clear and solid highway to the future is the Catholic Church, provided that it is directed towards the people of the world rather than towards the world of people and that it not want to be and exist only for herself.

21. In your opinion, is the Church ready to face the future?

Since the devil does not take a vacation even at Christmas, and is always lurking like a "roaring lion," Christians cannot fall asleep.

In my modest understanding, the dangers have always been the same, those produced by the absence

of God in the intelligence and in the hearts of men. In the face of any negative event amongst the many that are verified today, yesterday and always, and that have the same cause if we think about it, we only have to come to the same conclusion as Lazarus' sisters when Christ went to their house after their brother's death, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died".

I have always thought that sometimes, due to the weakness of men, the Church has not been human, has not been Christian. And whenever the Christian is not human, neither is he Christian.

I believe that the Christian exists - occupies a place in time - when the waves of the sea of the world crash into the breakwaters of a Christian conviction. The important thing is that the man who lives in the world, in that portion of the world where God has placed him, be able to confirm the formidable attraction that exerts itself and manifests itself when the wonderful convergence takes place of what is human with what is Christian and of what is Christian with what is human. Negative events can become good in the heart of man.

As a son of the Church, I want to follow the guidelines given by the Pope in everything and for everything in the third millennium.

To achieve that diverse people find themselves, Christ and their brothers and sisters is certainly a great way to better prepare us all in order to follow the teachings of the Church with more conviction and greater enthusiasm.

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Mateo Enrique Lladó 3, 2ºB – 07002 Palma de Mallorca – Spain
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