

Living your 4th Day

Mentality:

The best news that God loves us. Communicated by the best means possible--friendship. Directed to the best in each man or woman, that is, to his or her very being as a person—with a capacity to be convinced, to make decisions and to persevere.) The Mentality of the Cursillo affects our vision of God’s love, God Himself, The Church, the person, and the world.

Key Elements:

God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and more specifically God’s love, the Person, Friendship

Key Virtues:

Love, and Joy

Unless otherwise specified, all numbers in parenthesis (#) refer to “Reflections II - In Search of Oneself” by Eduardo Bonnín.

The Reality of God’s Love: The starting point of the mentality is still the knowledge of the current reality and the need to respond to it: Today, as in the past, people continue to ignore that God in Christ loves them; people still need to know and experience the love of God in their daily life. (FI3, 67) “God comes to encounter us”, this is the most revolutionary statement contained in the NT: God seeks us, because he loves us. He comes out to encounter us pretending that he just bumped into us, and he does so even with the one who would never seek him. (9) In Cursillo we speak often of Grace; in fact, the Cursillo centers its proclamation in the doctrine of Grace, in the life of Grace. (*Génesis y Teología del Cursillo de Cristiandad* by Monsignor José Ángel Sáiz) Grace is best understood as the free gift of the love of God, His friendship. Grace is the experience of the love of God in our lives, that encounter with Love. That’s why we exclaim “De Colores!” This is what is fundamental to being a Christian (Grace – The Love of God in Christ). LOVE is also what is fundamental to being human. Eduardo said that the supreme happiness of the human being is to love and to be loved. We were created by God for this purpose. (100) The Good News is that God loves you in Christ. In fact, God can only be truly known through the experience of love. (10) To understand the clear fact that God loves us in Christ. God loves me. To be Christian, more than anything else, is to feel loved by God and live astonished by this, because what is most genuinely Christian is to be loved by God. (Foundational Charism of the CM, National Website June, 2010)

Pope Francis in one of his recent talks reminds us that, like St. Paul, “even the lowliest of sinners can become the greatest of apostles by answering God’s call and allowing his grace to work in their heart and mind.” (General Audience June 30, 2021) There is hope for all men and women, there are no Lost Causes.

Am I living what is fundamental to being a Christian?

The Vision of God. A God who is the source of life for all people. He always loves and whose good He always wants, who loves each person in a unique and unrepeatable way (FI3, 77b) God is love and God is mercy itself, and He calls everyone to Himself, especially the sinners, those who feel they are far away from Him. Jesus has shown us who God really is. “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” (Jn 14:9) He explained, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17)

Christ is counting on you! This is a Radical statement! That the King of the Universe has us in mind. Yes, Christ is LIVING, NORMAL, and CLOSE TO US. (29-30) The All-Powerful God became a helpless baby at the incarnation because he loves us! (55) I remember a reflection I heard about the Lord's Baptism by John the Baptist: that Jesus chose to receive the baptism of forgiveness, even though he never sinned. At His Baptism, He stood in the water with all the outcasts, the losers, the sinners in the Jordan River. While the scribes and pharisees looked down on Jesus and the crowd (quite literally because they were standing on the shore). They expected the Messiah to be a Majestic Warrior King not a carpenter's son mixing with the rabble, the *chusma*, with the no-bodies. Eduardo warned us not to allow the heroic Christ from displacing the domestic, current, everyday Christ, who gets mixed in with the life of every person and gives meaning to all their actions and a new glow to the reality of their existence. (34) St. Jose Maria Escriva said that "we either learn to find the Lord in ordinary everyday life, or else we shall never find him." Christ shows us who and how the Father IS so that, any idea of God that does not depict him as lovable is actually distorting His true picture. (10) God does not observe you as a policeman would, but He looks at you with interest and passionate love, with eyes full of hope and love, as a father watches his child or a grandfather watches his grandchild. (12)

Do I always see God as lovable, or as the God who loves even those I find difficult to say that I love?

Vision of the Person.

In Cursillo the person is the focus of our concern. We see the person as a being created for love. (69) Every person, whatever their circumstance, is called to meet God, to transform their life and become a witness to the Gospel (FI3, 73b) The person is the reflection, the expression and the brightness of God's specific plan for the human being. A person is one who knows they are capable of loving and worthy of being loved; who knows he is limited, conditional and an integral part of a whole. The real revolution of concepts that Cursillo poses, is focused on helping the person discover their own worth, because of what they are and for their capacity to love and to be loved; certainly not because of their power, influence, or their knowledge. (69) The Cursillos in Christianity has a single purpose: that the Spirit of the Lord meets with the freedom of the human person and that this person on discovering that they are loved by God, changes their horizon and perspective because they realize that God has them in mind. (Study of a Charism, p. 25)

Once again, Eduardo states "it is a shame not to have the joy of being a Christian. Cursillo is precisely the joyful communication of being Christian. God in Christ loves us. I repeat, being a Christian is to feel oneself loved by God and to live astonished by this fact." (48) This is why Cursillo is primarily for the far away, those that do not know that God loves them, so they can experience the joy of knowing and accepting His love. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." (Jn 3:16)

Vision of the world

The world is the place of salvation, the horizon of the mission, the scope of Christian life, to be transformed through the Gospel by the action of conscious Christians (FI3 77c). The world is given to Christians as their mission, so our vision of the world as Cursillistas is not as an enemy,

but rather as redeemed persons to be saved. (Pg. 20 FI1) “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.” (Jn 3:17)

As Cardinal Cerejeira said “If you are aware that you are in possession of a good, an item of real value that others are deprived of, and yet you do not suffer from seeing others without it, you either have no faith in the good you have, or that good has not penetrated to the depths of your heart.” (52) As our Holy Father said: “In the Church of Jesus, which is the same yesterday, today and always, we all have a place, EVERYONE! That is why rigidity is not possible, because it closes the doors to 'everyone' and only keeps them afar for the 'perfect ones.’” (Letter to a priest by Pope Francis July 9, 2022)

Vision of the Church

Our vision of the Church is as a service institution meant to save others not as an institution of the privileged in which the members save themselves. (FI1, 20) “The Church, who loves and prefers what Jesus loved and preferred, cannot rest until she has reached all those who experience rejection, exclusion, and feel that they do not matter to anyone.” (Pope Francis speech 6 July 2016)

Pope Francis wrote to young people in 2019, he is also speaking to us: “Where does Jesus send us? There are no borders, no limits: he sends us everywhere (in Cursillo, we call it our movable square meter). The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away and most indifferent. The Lord seeks all; he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love. He invites us to be fearless missionaries wherever we are and in whatever company we find ourselves: in our neighborhoods, in school or sports or social life, in volunteer service or in the workplace. Wherever we are, we always have an opportunity to share the joy of the Gospel (The Kerygma). That is how the Lord goes out to meet everyone...He is counting on your courage, your boldness and your enthusiasm.” (Christus Vivit, 177). Pope Francis has used the image of the Church as if it were a field hospital. Why? because there are many, many wounded! So many people need their wounds healed! This is the mission of the Church: to heal the wounds of the heart, to open doors, to free people, to say that God is good, God forgives all, God is the Father, God is affectionate, God always waits for us. - The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, “closeness” (Pope Francis, homily at Casa Santa Marta, February 2015)

Do I aim to bring Christ’s love to all, or do I limit myself to those who think like me? (fish in my own self-made aquarium?)

Key Virtues in living our 4th Day. Love and Joy are the greatest proof of the presence of the Spirit in a person and in a community. Indeed, joy is the best expression of love. Joy communicates. (103) It helps us communicate with others. Every Cursillista should be asked the fundamental question, “Has the fact of being a Christian brought more fulfillment and happiness to your life? If the answer is no, it is clear that there are still remnants of judgementalism or false piety in our lives that are clouding our faith. (52) Because God makes it clear that his love is not cheerless, but pure joy, welling up whenever we allow ourselves to be loved by him: “*The*

Lord, your God, is in your midst, ... He will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing” (Zeph 3:17). (Pope Francis, Christus Vivit, 114)

“This is joy: to point to Jesus.” (Pope Francis, Angelus, December 13, 2020) If your faith and your life on your Fourth Day is not being lived in Joy, it is not being lived. As St. Francis De Sales exclaimed: A saint that is sad, is a sad saint”. Our Holy Father has lamented that too many Christians look like they are attending a funeral. But we have so many reasons to rejoice: “Christ is risen! Christ loves you!” (Pope Francis, Angelus, December 13, 2020), Eduardo reminds us; “What do I need to be happy and give the best of myself? One thing is to love and be loved heartily, enthusiastically!” (100)

Am I living my 4th Day with Joy?

Speaking of joy, our founder repeated many times that those boys who in 1944 started the Cursillo Movement in Mallorca, perhaps did only one thing: take Christianity out of the path of bitterness and place it on the highway of joy. (100) “Boys” because remember the Cursillo began as a youth movement from the Youth Group of Catholic Action in the 1940’s. Fr. Ivan Rohloff in his book, *The Origins and Development of Cursillo*, said that “Cursillo was intended to be as universal demographically as the Christian option itself. Yet the movement had always been identified with the audacity and the idealism of youth. It had gloried in the conquering those [persons] most alienated from the Church - and this had been one of its great strengths.” (Rohloff, 85)

Are we living our 4th Day with the restlessness, idealism and exuberance of youth?

Pope Francis reminds us that “If you have lost your inner vitality, your dreams, your enthusiasm, your optimism and your generosity, Jesus stands before you as once he stood before the dead son of the widow, and with all the power of his resurrection he urges you: “I say to you, arise!” (Lk 7:14) (Christus Vivit, 20) or as Eduardo put it “the world needs men and women of faith to give this world an uproar of hope...we Christians form a living unity in the heart of Christ. Make it possible my God, that we carry out in our lives what we celebrate in our faith. (19)

Friendship with God and others.

Friendship is the genuinely human and evangelical form of communication among people. It is the way God uses to relate with people, and it is the best way possible for a person to relate both with God and others. (79) Since friendship implies communication, what better way to communicate with God than through prayer? Pray Always! (1 Thess 5:17) Fr. Andrew Apostoli wrote that Christians who don’t pray will tend to have their faith experience become nothing more than a search for pious feelings. We don’t want to be Christians who merely feel good, or simply LOOK devout. (Apostoli, Walk Humbly with your God) Prayer is a spiritual energy operational in the whole of life and therefore in every situation that life may offer. Prayer with faith will establish a living person-to-person relationship between God and the person. It is inconceivable, unimaginable that Christian prayer be separated and removed from life. (105) This is true about the sacraments as well. The prayer of the Cursillista has to be natural, not fake or twisted; vigorous, constant, cheerful and confident; and supernatural in its goal! (106) Only in the nearness of God, in communion with Him, can we find the meaning of this life. (15)

Am I committed to prayer especially visits to the Blessed Sacrament as we experienced in the Cursillo weekend?

Pope Francis said recently that “[Christ] remains at the door of the heart. We say, ‘No, I do not want to know anything about you.’ And he remains silent, he remains there within reach, within heart’s reach because he is always faithful,” He is our most faithful friend. Christ must always be the point of reference for every believer who is trying to create a true friendship with somebody. Christ’s friendship had nothing angelical, disembodied, or dehumanized about it. In Christ, his whole being is a clear language of love and tenderness. (33) In a TED talk in 2017 Pope Francis called us to a revolution of tenderness! He said, "Tenderness is not weakness; it is fortitude," our Holy Father said. "It is the path of solidarity, the path of humility" End of quote. Do not be afraid to laugh and joke. Eduardo believed that a sense of humor is a dimension of tenderness. (99) A danger we can run into is taking ourselves too seriously - instead of relishing in the encounter with the Lord and our brothers and sisters.

Earlier I mentioned creating a true friendship with others. St. Thomas Aquinas said that “there is nothing on this earth to be prized more than true friendship.” I once heard a rollo given in Mallorca that described the difference between *Amistad pura v. Amistad para* (True Friendship v. Friendship “for something”) Our goal should not be just to bring people to Cursillo, otherwise we run the risk of not continuing a friendship because we feel “mission accomplished” next target! Historically, we have said in Cursillo that the friendship-tree cannot be planted or grown in expectation of its fruits or its shadow, but for the joy that more trees exist, for the joy of knowing they exist, for the pleasure of their company, because their mere presence creates closeness. (80)

Group Reunion and Ultreya!

Group Reunion and Ultreyas serve not only to maintain the enthusiasm and the drive discovered, rediscovered and experienced in the three days of the Cursillo, but also to make them dynamic, to activate and expand them from the very being of the persons in their concrete circumstance, that is, where God has placed them. (Foundational Charism of the CM, National Website June, 2010)

The Group Reunion: Life as a reality shared in friendship.

The Ultreya: It is essential to the Cursillo method that the Ultreya remains primarily a kind of meeting place where individuals can go to make new acquaintances, to make and be friends — and develop friendships of the type that will drive, strengthen, direct and sustain the conversion process and all its unsuspected blessings. The Ultreya is the gathering of the Friendship Groups — the Reunion of the Group Reunions. The Groups and their members participate in it for the same reasons they go to the Friendship Group Reunions: to share what everybody and every Group lives.

Are you meeting with a group of friends regularly?

If we understand Cursillo to be “life being lived” the final question is **how is my life being lived?** Our charism calls for allowing God’s Grace to be an expression of what is being lived, with spontaneity, joy, and enthusiasm and characterized by its radical optimism; boldness and firmness; and conviction; (Foundational Charism of the CM, National Website June, 2010)

Let us always consider ourselves, like Eduardo did, as an apprentice Christian, still learning, still striving to become Christian every day. Because we know that conversion is not one time act but a permanent and progressive process that lasts throughout our lives. (FI3, 49) Not just doing Christian things, but living what Eduardo called Christianness, Christian living, being Christ in the world. A world that God created and God loves. Not preaching the Good News, but BEING the Good News (Bonnin, Evangelization through Conversion) and the happy and joyful witness of one's own life of faith (FI3, 47).

“The soul that walks in love neither tires others nor grows tired.” – St. John of the Cross

Final quote on perseverance

“We are saved by Jesus because he loves us and cannot go against his nature. We can do any number of things against him, yet he loves us and he saves us. For only what is loved can be saved. Only what is embraced can be transformed. The Lord's love is greater than all our problems, frailties and flaws. Yet it is precisely through our problems, frailties and flaws that he wants to write this love story. He embraced the prodigal son, he embraced Peter after his denials, and he always, always, always embraces us after every fall, helping us to rise and get back on our feet. Because the worst fall, and pay attention to this, *the worst fall, the one that can ruin our lives, is when we stay down and do not allow ourselves to be helped up*”. (Christus Vivit, 120)

Main source of quotes: Eduardo Bonnin, *Reflections II, In Search of Oneself*.

Other Sources:

- Pope Francis writings and speeches
- Fundamental Ideas 1 and 3

Thank you and De Colores!

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