



Cursillos in Christianity National Newsletter

National Cursillo Center • P.O. Box 799 • Jarrell, TX 76537 • 512-746-2020 • www.natl-cursillo.org

Cursillo Evangelization and the Internet

By Dale Platteter, National Cursillo Webservant

Like it or not, we are all using the Internet. And recently, our national leaders discovered that we are unintentionally publishing a newsletter for Cursillo “insiders”. We had 1,400 newsletter readers last month. How many Cursillistas did we miss? About a million?

Watching our Cursillo website traffic has reinforced my “*movable square meter*” evangelization thoughts. Have you noticed a mentality shift that has been happening in society when it comes to the Internet? Have you experienced a *lack of effectiveness* when attempting to use the Internet to communicate with your friends?



Cursillo Website Traffic. Map of 243 downloads of the National Newsletter for 6 days, Feb. 5-10, 2015. Notice clusters of readers have appeared, suggesting that bulk-emailing techniques are being used in some dioceses to encourage readership. Do email announcements help or hurt Fourth Day communication?

In this modern world, *square meter evangelization* and *personal contact* are still our Charism. And this holds true for all phases of the Movement, from Precursillo to Postcursillo, including all communication techniques used during the Fourth Day.

It is time to gather some data. A lack of attendance (or growth) at our Group Reunions, Ultreyas, Schools of Leaders, or Weekends might indicate that we are moving in the wrong direction. Could weak attendance numbers be related to *personal contact*, or a lack of it? There are many causes for stagnation, but I would like to believe that *personal contact* is at the heart of the solution.

Here is a bad idea. To increase our National Newsletter readership, let's propose a bulk-mailing effort and put everyone to work distributing 10,000 paper newsletters, like we did during the good old days with *Ultreya Magazine*? At least when I received *Ultreya Magazine* from the post office, I took time to read it. I did not consider it "just another piece of junk mail".

Here is another bad idea. Enlist a team of volunteers to manage a bulk email-marketing directory of 50,000 Cursillistas in the USA and ask all diocesan movements to give us their address lists? Then obtain a professional account with Constant Contact Marketing and join the spammers? This proposal is so worldly and non-cursillo that it hurts. The idea lacks the *charism of personal contact* and goes beyond our *moveable square meter*.

Or maybe we need to build a fancy website with nice graphics to attract more Cursillistas to our newsletters? Do we jump into the Internet marketing world or stick to the *foundational charism*?

A reminder. There is no better way for the evil one to crush the Cursillo Movement than to hit us right between our eyes at the core of our charism. Personal contact is still the key to evangelization; so don't keep this a secret.

Here is a list of excellent **personal contact methods** that get my attention:

- talk to me after Group Reunion or visit me at home
- call me on the phone
- listen while I share my life events with you
- learn the names of my kids and grandkids
- pick me up and take me to the *Ultreya*
- treat me to lunch after Mass
- send me a handwritten letter
- show me that I am not just another person, but individually loved by you and by God.

Here is a list of **non-personal contact** (NOT RECOMMENDED) methods:

- refer me to your website
- email me your newsletter or calendar of events
- send me an email invitation or text message
- forward an email from someone else
- post information on your website or Facebook account and wonder why I did not attend *Ultreya* and Group Reunion
- send me a flyer about your upcoming event
- expect me to attend Group Reunion without a phone call

For the Cursillo Method to be effective, we must be true to our *foundational charism* in everything that we do, during every phase of the Movement. Our message must permeate into every interaction of life and with everyone who enters into our *moveable square meter* of space.

When the founder Eduardo Bonnín suggested that we evangelize the *faraway*, he did not mean those outside our physical square meter (i.e. those so-called friends in our Facebook or email

contacts lists). He meant our close personal friends who are far away from God - those we can physically touch.

“The Internet can offer magnificent opportunities for evangelization if used with competence and a clear awareness of its strengths and weaknesses.” (Pope John Paul II) However, the Cursillo has a specific charism and method for evangelization: true friendship can only come by way of *personal contact*.

Some people believe that posting something on a Cursillo website or broadcasting an email will substitute for good old-fashioned personal contact. St. Paul, Patron of the Cursillo, gives us his insight into First Century communication, *“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Good News!”* (Romans 10:15) We most effectively communicate the Good News with our feet, not our keyboards.

How do we use the tools of this world and still remain true to our Charism? How do we find the time needed for personal contact - without using email? I don't know. But it must be done.

Here are some suggestions. Let's begin at the foundation. Bring one person to Group Reunion next week. Pick them up or take them to Ultreya. Call them on the phone just to chat. Concentrate on one person, one at a time. Literally, be a true friend.

The Cursillo Message is important. God in Christ loves us. And I need to communicate this message by the most effective means that God has given me, through friendship. Computers can assist at times, but they can only *post* raw information. It's my job, with God's grace, to *communicate* it.

Technology is attractive, but please avoid using this “tool of temptation” if it alters the physical size of your *moveable square meter* or it substitutes for personal contact. Use personal contact in your *moveable square meter* (not 100 square miles) at all cost. And if the Internet becomes the only way, then maybe we are too busy to evangelize.

Pope Francis Meets with Cursillistas in Rome

“You are called - you yourselves did not make a choice, no, you were called, and you were called - to bear the fruit of the charism that the Lord has confided to you and that is at the heart of the Cursillo Movement . . . Your challenge is to go forward and to take the good news with you: God lives in us, God is in us. This is the grace! To help men and women today to discover the beauty of faith and of a life of grace.”

Pope Francis met with Cursillo leaders at III European Ultreya in Rome on April 30, 2015 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Movement in Italy. You can watch the video at <http://www.natl-cursillo.org/resources/> and you can also read the transcribed text of his speech to the Cursillo.



2nd Cursillo Episode on EWTN

The second of two episodes, **Bringing our Friends to Christ**, aired on EWTN's **The Church Universal** program on May 12, 2015 and May 15, 2015. In case you missed it, you can view the episode on the National Cursillo Website, <http://www.natl-cursillo.org/resources/>.

The two EWTN videos and Pope Francis' recent address to the Cursillo have been recently added to the Cursillo Resource Center.

2015 National Encounter

The National Encounter will be held **July 23-26, 2015** at Villanova University in Philadelphia, PA. Following are the workshop sessions scheduled for this encounter:

- **Friendship with Christ, Key to Evangelization** by *Dr. Ralph Martin from the Diocese of Lansing.*
- **Charity in the 21st Century** by *Deacon Gary Terrana from the Diocese of Buffalo.*
- **Attitudes and Reactions** by *Maribel Gomez from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.*
- **Prayer and Discernment** by *Rev. John Myers from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.*
- **Means to Energize Your Fourth Day** by *Walter Benavidez from the Diocese of Wichita.*

The Encounter Flyer, Agenda, Registration Form and Frequently Ask Questions (FAQ) are now available and can be downloaded at:

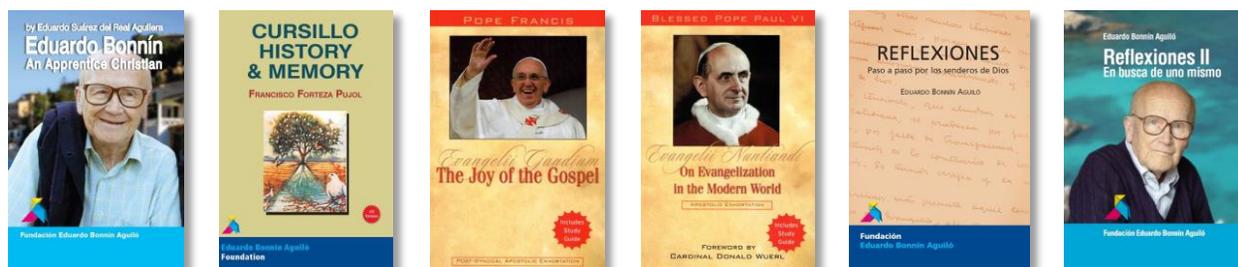
<http://www.natl-cursillo.org/> (English)

<http://www.natl-cursillo.org/espanol/> (Spanish)

<http://www.natl-cursillo.org/viet/> (Vietnamese)

Thanks to your donation to the \$3/YR Campaign, the National Encounter registration fee has been reduced to \$325 per person, which is \$60 less than the 2013 National Encounter registration fee. There are only 750 seats available at Villanova University. It is expected to be a fully packed National Encounter. Hope to see you there!

Cursillo Bookstore Most Recent Publications



To purchase these books or other publications, visit the Bookstore at <http://www.natl-cursillo.org> or contact the National Cursillo Center at 512-746-2020.

\$3/YR Campaign Update & Benefits

As of May 20, 2015, the National Cursillo Center has received a total donation of \$68,475. This amount is up 8% from March 2015. The National Cursillo Center has issued 106 vouchers worth

\$11,550 to the dioceses that donated \$200 or more towards the campaign. Additional National Encounter vouchers will be issued after the cut-off date of May 31, 2015.

Thanks to your donation to the campaign, Cursillistas in affiliated Dioceses can enjoy an additional 10% discount for each book order over \$50.00 as of February 1, 2015. That means Cursillistas can enjoy a total of 20% discount as a benefit of being affiliated with the National Cursillo Movement. The National Cursillo Center also provided bookstore vouchers for 8 dioceses that are establishing Cursillo.

Continue promoting the campaign by all means of communication such as Friendship Group Reunion, Ultreya, School of Leaders, Regional Encounters, workshops, personal contact, group e-mail, etc. For more information about the \$3/YR Campaign, visit <https://www.natl-cursillo.org/donate/>.

Remember National Cursillo in Your Will or Living Trust

Structure your will to provide for your family first. Then include a gift to the charitable organization or movement you love. Consider leaving a legendary gift to the National Cursillo Movement when you make your will or living trust. Contact the National Cursillo Center if you decide to include the National Cursillo Movement in your will or trust so a proper gift acknowledgement can be made. Make a lasting impact through your donation. Thank you very much for your continuous support and generosity.

De Colores!

Hoang Tran – National Cursillo Service Administrator
Ceferino Aguillón, Jr. – National English Coordinator
Juan Ruiz – National Hispanic Coordinator
Joachim Le – National Vietnamese Coordinator



**25th National Cursillo[®] Encounter
Villanova University, Villanova, PA
July 23 – 26, 2015**

Last Name:

First Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

E-Mail:

Phone:

Diocese:

Region #:

Language Group:

Male or Female:

Select one: Bishop Priest Deacon Vowed Religious Laity

Select one: Spiritual Advisor Assist. Spiritual Advisor Lay Director Other:

If you wish to room with a specific person (spouse, friend, relative) then the other person's registration form must accompany this form.

Do you have a roommate preference? If yes, provide name:

Need assistance - physically challenged? Describe need:

Make checks payable to: National Cursillo Center. Only MasterCard and Visa credit cards are accepted.

Registration Fee is \$325.00 per person. Full payment and this form must be received by June 15, 2015. Registration fee increases to \$400.00 per person beginning June 16, 2015. **Unable to guarantee registration after June 30, 2015.**

Visa or MasterCard:

Card Number:

Name on Credit Card:

Expiration Date:

Voucher # (if any):

Discount:

Amount Submitted:

Please use a separate Registration Form for each person. Type or print legibly and fill in all spaces as applicable.

Send this form and payment to:

National Cursillo[®] Center

P.O. Box 799

Jarrell, TX 76537

512-746-2020

admin@natl-cursillo.org

**There is a \$40.00 non-refundable fee for all cancellations through May 31, 2015. No refunds after May 31, 2015.
The National Cursillo[®] Center is responsible for payment to Villanova University regardless of cancellations.**

For office use only – Registration Confirmation # _____