

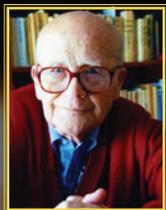
CURSILLOS

in CHRISTIANITY
National Newsletter

EDUARDO BONNÍN AGUILÓ

100 YEARS

BIOGRAPHY AND MENTALITY - PART 9



Servant of God
Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló
Founder of
Cursillos in Christianity
1917 – 2008

October 2021

[Welcome](#)

[What is Cursillo](#)

[My Resource Center](#)

[Cursillo Literature](#)

[National Newsletter](#)

[Palanca Requests](#)

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An interview with Eduardo Bonnín appeared in “Proa,” a supplement of the official bulletin of the Diocese of Mallorca.

A LOOK FROM CURSILLO #100. IN THE FIRST CURSILLO, WE KNEW WHERE WE WERE HEADED.

“All the phrases are realized in living ideas.”

Eduardo, did you know where Cursillo was going when the first Cursillo took place?

*“I did not have the slightest doubt. In the first Cursillo, we knew where we were going. How - of course - we could not predict. It is not that we had an anticipated knowledge of the events that have been happening, but that from the beginning, you can be sure, our apostolic action was supernatural in its motives, universal in its intention, and alive and active in its implementation. The tangible and clear proof of this is that all the phrases said in the Cursillos do not remain only phrases but summarize and achieve living ideas that have since vitalized many lives. These phrases were said in Cursillo number 1 and repeated in each one to the last Cursillo. These phrases have a living and throbbing essence of authentic Christianity. **Conscious and growing grace – Saints with jackets and ties. Catholics on horseback, dreamers of the divine.**”*

- Church, we want to be Church, intimate in its universal rhythm. We are concerned about souls, not works. We are interested in the vineyard of the Lord and not that of the Lords. It is the Holy Spirit who shakes our souls through Catholic Action.

- Catholic Action is the action of Christ in all those who are united by grace and docile to its impulses.

One can expect everything from those driven by the divine force that works in the sacraments. All things are possible to those who, in grace, gather in the name of the Lord. We do not need miracles to believe and to act, but that we might have so much faith that we deserve that you grant them. We do not want to be good people; we want to be saints, and that with our enthusiasm, our dedication, and our spirit of charity, others may also be.

All this was in the rollos of the first Cursillo (which I keep); you cannot deny a triumphal accent filled with the mission, the certainty, and the joy of conquering the world for God. (Proa, May 1954, pages 6-7)

THE MIND IS A GOSPEL; THE HEART, A TABERNACLE AND THE ARMS, A LEVER TO LIFT THE WORLD TO GOD.

THE DESERT

In 1955, there was a significant event in the life of Eduardo Bonnín and all the Cursillistas. Bishop Hervás was moved out of the Diocese of Mallorca. He was replaced by Bishop Enciso, who, through a pastoral letter, suspended all the activities of the Cursillo Movement in Mallorca. This event was, possibly, one of the most significant trials that Eduardo experienced. On the one hand, it shook him, but at the same time reinforced and confirmed the transcendence of his beliefs, giving an accurate and definitive value to the apostolic action, to which he was dedicated by divine election and by his commitment.

History reminds us that all great men and all great works are subject to great trials, the great deserts, deserts that are only crossed by authentic miracles. Eduardo Bonnín and the Cursillo

Movement are part of these “shake up” of great trials. The most significant evidence was undoubtedly the one that has become known as “the pastoral letter of Bishop Enciso,” which on August 15, 1956, entitled “Pastoral Letter on the Cursillo,” prohibited all Cursillo activity. This letter “shook” Eduardo, all the Cursillista family, and a good part of the religious climate of Mallorca.

Eduardo spent almost ten years in the desert, from May 30, 1955, to September 21, 1964. Eduardo refers to these moments with great sadness. “Bishop Hervás was sent to Ciudad Real, and now it was Bishop Enciso’s era. He wrote a pastoral letter that made us suffer greatly.” (An Apprentice Christian, p. 67).

Eduardo requested an audience with Bishop Enciso, where he said the following:

“It was my obligation to transmit the grief that many Cursillistas were experiencing. I had never seen anyone pound a table so many times in frustration.” “All I did was ask him one question, ‘If a bishop tells me that I have been in a certain country on a certain date, and it is not true, my obligation as a Catholic is to tell him that I have or that I have not.’ When he in all his logic responded negatively, I made him note, ‘Then what your pastoral letter says is not true, Bishop.’ He ended our conversation by yelling at me, “This is what I want!” (An Apprentice Christian, pages 67-68)

This response profoundly marked the future of the Cursillos on the island. Bishop Enciso did not want Cursillos in his diocese. Eduardo was asked: “And now what are you going to do?” To which he replied, “Well obey, because if the one who has to obey does not obey, the one who commands will believe that if things go wrong, it is not because he commands badly but because he is not obeyed.” (Testimony of Ramon Armengol)

MAGNA CARTA OF THE CURSILLOS

In 1957, there was a good moment for Eduardo Bonnín. While his life was deprived of freedom, regarding his apostolic activity in the Cursillos, and in some ways his public life, an event in Ciudad Real, where Bishop Juan Hervás had been transferred, propelled the activity of Cursillos to take new flights, although outside of Mallorca. Eduardo traveled several times to the peninsula. The desert became a catalyst.

Bishop Hervás published a Pastoral Letter from Ciudad Real, ***The Cursillos in Christianity, Instrument of Christian Renewal.***

Eduardo immediately recognized it as the “Magna Carta of the Cursillos.” This letter returned the life to the Cursillo Movement, and it was like a rebirth for Eduardo, which had to be supported by nothing more than a Pastoral letter. This letter was why Bishop Hervás came to be known as the “Bishop of the Cursillos.”

Forteza said: “This was a complete treatise on our movement prepared up to that time.” As a result, some have said that it is the most comprehensive Pastoral Letter ever written.

During the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Bishop Enciso, the center of gravity of Cursillos moved from Mallorca to Ciudad Real. At the invitation of Bishop Hervás, Eduardo Bonnín participated in the first Cursillos of Ciudad Real.

“The establishment of Cursillos in Ciudad Real began with three Cursillos in which leaders from Mallorca participated. Thus, the first one took place on December 17-21, 1955, with Don Jaime

Daviu as Spiritual Advisor, Eduardo Bonnín as rector and the “professors” were Juan Moncadas, and some locals from Ciudad Real: Santamaría, de la Peña, Calahorra, and Sánchez de la Nieta.” (Cursillo History & Memory, page 138)

STRUCTURE OF IDEAS

Time does not stop, and the year 1959 arrived. The idea that had always accompanied Eduardo was to compile all the critical concepts of the Cursillos, linked from the essence to purpose, through the method, always to present the reasons [why] and the criteria in which the fundamental ideas of the Cursillos lie.

As Eduardo tells us:

Another thing that we had to plead for with enormous insistence was the creation of what we called in the Vertebraction of Ideas¹, a Central Secretariat, an organization that centralized Cursillos. At the same time, make explicit what Cursillo intended to achieve and provide information about what the Cursillo is and what Cursillo is intended to be to those who wanted it. (History of a Charism, p.11)

Eduardo and his friends did not stop in the moments of the desert which the Pastoral Letter of Bishop Enciso brought about. Instead, they took advantage of the lack of activity of the Cursillos to study in-depth and reflect. For Eduardo, reflection had always been one of his priorities. He had assembled outlines of the mentality that had developed in “**the laboratory of ideas**,” that is, his office. It was from this “laboratory” that the book **Structure of Ideas** came about. As Eduardo stated, the intention of the work is, “We wrote Structure of Ideas in 1959; that is, almost 30 years ago. It was a challenging time in the history of Cursillos, in which the validity of practically every single piece and basic idea of the Movement was discussed, and where our silence could have been interpreted as full conformity with all lines developed by the different National Secretariats.” (Vertebración de Ideas, 2004, p. 15), [not in English Structure of Ideas].

At the time, the Structure of Ideas book had an enthusiastic acceptance and came to unite, even more, the group of friends who shared the idea with Eduardo that it was the right time to put all that was intended with the Cursillos in writing. Today, this book is of great help to those who want to go all out in this beautiful world of Cursillos, where Eduardo has humbly allowed himself to be filled by God and has left us this divine work of reflection. 

¹ Vertebrate, used as a verb, is not common in English. Vertebración de Ideas does not accurately translate to Structure of Ideas. It would be more accurate to say The Formulation of Ideas, (putting them together AS A FRAMEWORK to provide SUPPORT, strength and structure to Christian living, i.e. as a backbone gives SUPPORT, strength and structure to the body.) As the word is used frequently in one form or another in this book, it is felt that it would be more appropriate to keep the original word Vertebración, bearing in mind its true meaning, to give backbone to Christian living.

NCSA ANNOUNCEMENTS

2022 In-Person National Encounter July 21-24, 2022
(tentative), Chapman University, Orange, CA

2021 Virtual National Encounter
Shirts are available at a discounted price \$10 + shipping



Spiritual Reflection

on the Foundational Charism of Cursillos



Three important parts of Cursillo are the history, mentality, and essence of the charism. The history can be linked to the importance of history and remembering what we have received from the Old and New Testaments and how they are applied appropriately to our lives. The mentality includes ideas and a way of thinking that brings us a structure to the charism such as theology and catechism might bring a different understanding to the truth of the bible. The charism has been received and lived by Cursillistas from the beginning as the Holy Spirit inspired the importance of friendship, the person, and the Gospel.

History is important because if we make an assumption about something we think to be true but is not actually true we might reach a false conclusion. How did Jesus speak about the history and tradition of his own religion? “Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old.” Matthew 13:52. From St Augustine are attributed the following thoughts: It is said about Scripture that the New Testament is prefigured in the Old Testament, and the New Testament reveals what is hidden in the Old Testament. Or poetically, in the New is in the Old concealed, the Old is in the New revealed.

The Charism of Cursillo was to bring a new way of Evangelization to the enduring Gospel of Christ that has been with us for 2000 years. And so Jesus instructed the Pharisees and religious leaders of his time about continuing some practices such as fasting but applying them in a new way that we would come to know as Palanca or uniting them to the sacrifice of Christ. We can read this teaching as follows:

“Then the disciples of John approached him and said, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast [much], but your disciples do not fast?” Jesus answered them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one patches an old cloak with a piece of unshrunk cloth, for its fullness pulls away from the cloak and the tear gets worse. People do not put new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. Rather, they pour new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.” Matthew 9:14-17

The Cursillo movement and its method were this new wine, a new love of friends and of the far away to lead them to Christ, and to lead them to a way of discovering God’s love through the person and teaching of Jesus.

In learning about our Charism we may learn from how Jesus made distinctions between what God revealed and what people practiced.

So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, “Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?”

He responded, “Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me;

In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.’

You disregard God’s commandment but cling to human tradition.” Mark 7:5-8.

It is for us in our study to look at what the Holy Spirit inspired as part of the Cursillo movement and what are the thousands of human traditions that people add from place to place and see them in their proper perspective to determine what is most important.

In looking for perspective and wisdom, let us turn to the example of Solomon, who prayed for wisdom to help others and not himself. “That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him: Whatever you ask, I will give you. Solomon answered God: “You have shown great favor to David my father, and you have made me king to succeed him. Now, LORD God, may your word to David my father be confirmed, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. Give me, therefore, wisdom and knowledge to govern this people, for otherwise who could rule this vast people of yours?”

God then replied to Solomon: Because this has been your wish—you did not ask for riches, treasures, and glory, or the life of those who hate you, or even for a long life for yourself, but you have asked for wisdom and knowledge in order to rule my people over whom I have made you king— wisdom and knowledge are given you. I will also give you riches, treasures, and glory, such as kings before you never had, nor will those who come after you.” 2 Chronicles 1:7-12 .

Are we studying about Cursillo in order to prove it is what we want it to be? Or are we sincerely motivated and guided by the Holy Spirit to discover the charism of Cursillo as the Holy Spirit wanted to give it to Eduardo Bonnin and the first Cursillistas and that it might be a powerful instrument of Christian friendship.

So how do we continue to look at the resources available to us for our study? Perhaps in the spirit of our patron St Paul’s words to Timothy, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 In the same way, there are many books and sources of Cursillo literature that are good for teaching such as those in the Bibliographies as appears in Fundamental Ideas.

We may think of the story of the car wreck as presented in an earlier Rollo. Eyewitnesses are essential to know exactly what happened. Yet car wrecks in general may be examined by

statistics as to their frequency and causes. I thought of one of the most important events of our Catholic history. A witness to the resurrection like Mary Magdalene is essential. First, she noticed that the stone was removed from the tomb, then she went and told the other disciples, Peter and John came and “Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead.” John 20:8-9.

“But Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been.

And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken my Lord, and I don’t know where they laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there,

but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?

Whom are you looking for?” She thought it was the gardener and said to him,

“Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabboni” which means Teacher.

Jesus said to her, “Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and what he told her.” John 20:11-18

In the Catholic church, theology and further reflection also shaped the formation of the Creed and the Catechism which share the same truth of the Gospels but in different words and with an inspired understanding such as through St Paul, our patron who also had a later experience of the Risen Christ and wrote much about grace in his understanding of Christianity. Both of these contributions were valuable in contributing to the growth of Christianity and we share both of the stories of Mary Magdalene and Paul today.

A simple point of history is that something has to occur first and then it can be written about. Looking at Fundamental Ideas may be similar to how we understand God’s revelation to us and history in general. For instance, Fundamental Ideas is based on the Cursillo Movement, the Cursillo Movement isn’t based on Fundamental Ideas. The Cursillo Movement existed before the book, and God existed before the Bible. The Bible is based on God’s revelation and the life of Jesus. God and Jesus are not based on the Bible. In John’s Gospel we read “in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Jesus is the Word of God, and the Bible is words about God. How did the Apostles experience Jesus if the bible wasn’t written yet. They experienced him directly in his presence and listening to his words and seeing how he lived.

Today, Jesus can be encountered in the sacraments and in our neighbor and not just through the Bible as an instrument of

inspiration and God’s presence. So also the Fundamental Ideas can teach us about Cursillo, but it is not the exclusive experience, we can also encounter the Cursillo through the 3 Day weekend, Ultreyas, grouping and many other gatherings, friendships and witnesses of the lived Cursillo experience.

So how do we learn about Cursillo? Similarly, to Paul saying that leaders and teachers are needed in Cursillo. We learn not only from reading but also through our friends who accompany us in the School of Leaders or other opportunities like this workshop. Paul shared about the importance of preachers in the early Church. “For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring [the] good news!” But not everyone has heeded the good news; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what was heard from us?” Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.” Romans 10:13-17.

When Juan shared about Eduardo and friend visiting some young people in jail at the request of the Bishop, I thought of the following Scripture about Jesus when beginning his ministry. “He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him.

He said to them, “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke 4:16-21.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... To proclaim liberty to captives... this phrase came to me when I remembered the story of Eduardo visiting those condemned to death whom the bishop asked Eduardo and friend to visit to bring them faith and hope in the love and mercy of God. The best freedom for those captives physically or to sin, is the freedom of being the Children of God and receiving the promise of eternal life. Cursillo gives us a new freedom to live a life of grace. a life in service of God and neighbor.

The Holy Spirit initiates a charism. In the Bible we can read about the Holy Spirit helping the church begin at Pentecost. Giving grace to believers at Baptism and bestowing gift and fruits that we may find in the Books of Isaiah and Galatians. In the same way the Holy Spirit guided Eduardo upon hearing Pope Pius XII speak about reaching people in new ways with evangelization efforts especially to the far away.

In thinking about the far away, this parable came to mind about Jesus saying that all will be invited.

“When the time for the dinner came, he dispatched his servant to say to those invited, ‘Come, everything is now ready.’ But one by one, they all began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, ‘I have purchased a field and must go to examine it; I ask you, consider me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have purchased five yoke of oxen and am on my way to evaluate them; I ask you, consider me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have just married a woman, and therefore I cannot come.’

The servant went and reported this to his master. Then the master of the house in a rage commanded his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor and the crippled, the blind and the lame.’ The servant reported, ‘Sir, your orders have been carried out and still there is room.’ The master then ordered the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedgerows and make people come in that my home may be filled.’ Luke 14:17-23.

Juan also reminded us that an essential part of Cursillo is the 3 Encounters that are important to one’s spiritual life. The Encounter with oneself, with God and with others. In the Encounter with self, I thought of the rich young man who went to Jesus to ask him what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked him to sell his possessions and follow Jesus. The man encountered himself being very attached to his possessions and thus went away sad because he had also wanted to follow Jesus but did not yet have a desire to follow Jesus that was stronger than his attachment to his possessions. In the Encounter with God, I thought of the ‘good sinner’ on the cross next to Jesus who encountered Jesus as merciful as he asked to be remembered by Jesus when Jesus entered into the Kingdom of heaven. Jesus told him, “Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43.

In the Encounter with others, I thought of the story of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. “When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, “This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.”

Jesus said to them, “There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.”

But they said to him, “Five loaves and two fish are all we have here.”

Then he said, “Bring them here to me,” Matthew 14:15-18.

Jesus wants his disciples to be concerned about others in a loving way and to have confidence that with God’s help, that they can help them both in their physical needs and their spiritual needs. In this way the disciples were preparing to bring others to Christ.

Juan spoke of God lighting a candle within our souls, this is similar to praying for the Holy Spirit to enkindle the hearts of the faithful with the fire of your love. I thought of the phrase, “were not our hearts burning within us as he explained the scriptures to us?” in the following story on the road to Emmaus. “And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where

they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.” Luke 24:30-35.

Yet Cursillo is a short course or a simple course in Christianity, thus “unless you become like children you cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Each person has a different and unique potential and different and unique limitations. God works in and through all of us through the simplicity and profound gift of friendship as we can hear in John’s Gospel.

“I no longer call you slaves but friends. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.” John 15:12-17 Thus Cursillo is based on love and friendship which are simple, accessible and able to be lived by all of us.

Finally, Juan talked about the need for Cursillo to be Christ centered. I thought of looking for phrases of Scripture to quote, and I found the following in the Book of Revelation:

“After this I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches* in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne, and from the Lamb.”

All the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They prostrated themselves before the throne, worshiped God, and exclaimed:

“Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, power, and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” Then one of the elders spoke up and said to me, “Who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?” said to him, “My lord, you are the one who knows.” He said to me, “These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. “For this reason they stand before God’s throne and worship him day and night in his temple. The one who sits on the throne will shelter them.” Revelation 7:9-15.

Perhaps these praising God are like Cursillistas who have come to know God and praise Him for His greatness and mercy. Those who may have endured difficulties to live their Christian faith or to live as Cursillo leaders. So let us live our Charism that its fruits will be especially the love and mercy we have from shared with others that they might know and love Christ.

Father Alex Waraksa

I lived my Cursillo in April 2000 - Diocese of Rockford. When I received the invitation to write an article on the topic "Desert", I thought, "wow! I could write a book on this topic, if it is about my spiritual life and the many times I have found myself in a "spiritual desert".

Before, when I heard someone say that they felt like they were going through a "spiritual desert", I cannot deny that I easily judged them inside and thinking that my spiritual life was "very strong", I used to give advice that I had not been asked for. What a big mistake I had made and what pride flooded me...my false perception of a "better" spiritual life than others!

Many years went by like that, in which I felt so strong and unbreakable; until it was my turn. Oh, better yet, looking back... at that time I felt very well spiritually, but in reality I only lived a life of "rites at times" of much prayer and little prayer, much Mass and little relationship with God.

A few years ago, when I finished my service in the diocesan secretariat as coordinator of the School of Leaders, I began to live a deep spiritual desert. During this period of time I felt a great emptiness, I felt a great apathy, I was a little spiritually aimless. I felt that during my service, I had the company of many "friends" and immediately at the end of that service, those "friends" were only friends of the character. It was a time of much personal self-examination, of many unanswered questions, visits to the Blessed Sacrament where I did not feel that Jesus was speaking to me, my prayer felt very meaningless. Thanks to a great friend and spiritual director, I was able to give direction to my spiritual life. I remember going to see him and feeling so ashamed that I had to talk to him about my spiritual desert. Perhaps, I was embarrassed because I was judging myself the way I had judged other people when they confided in me that they were going through a spiritual drought in their life. I felt that this was sin, that anyone going through this was because they did not have a strong prayer life. How wrong I was! Blessed be God for this blessed prayer who helped me through. I remember the words that stuck with me forever. When I told him that I felt empty, useless and in a spiritual desert, I expected him to give me a "lecture" on how bad I was or tell me I needed to pray more. But what he said to me was, "mija"... I'm glad you are going through that desert! I'm glad! That means that you are growing up. What you are doing is no longer working because it has already helped you reach the spiritual level you reached. Now you need to increase your prayer and change a bit the way you feed your spiritual life. The desert is great! It's like hitting rock bottom in order to take flight and keep growing." Those words have done a 180-degree turn in my spiritual life. That was the most transcendent spiritual advice I have ever received in my life.

How right the deacon was! I changed the type of books I was reading. I realized that during the time I was serving in the school of leaders, I had only focused on purely cursillo books; which is not a bad thing, but I was giving and giving without feeding myself spiritually. I was praying to ask and ask, so I was making too much noise myself and I couldn't hear God speak to me. I also realized that my prayer had become very routine, but I didn't even know where to begin to change that. But as I became aware of these areas of spiritual opportunity, I noticed that my capacity for wonder was awakening again, just

when I needed it most. We had gone to visit the University of Notre Dame in Indiana with my sons over spring break and while they were looking for t-shirts with the ND logo on them, I went to the book section. Since I was a child, I have always been drawn to the now St. Teresa of Calcutta and I found a little book called "At Prayer with Mother Teresa". I bought the prayer book of Mother Teresa, who had also gone through many spiritual deserts and even doubted the existence of God. Well, I found in the first pages of this book a simple prayer that to this day is my guide at times when I feel dry in prayer. I share it with you here:

A PRAYER FOR PRAYER

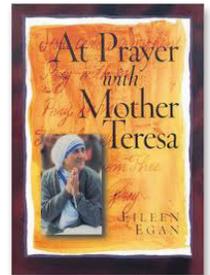
Mother Teresa wrote a lot about prayer. For example, she instructed her sisters to improve their spirit of prayer and to collect themselves during Lent. She would tell them, "Let us rid our minds of everything that is not Jesus. If you find it hard to pray, ask Him again and again."

Jesus enters my heart

*Pray with me, Pray in me – That I may learn from YOU
How to pray.*

My friends, when you find yourself in a desert, don't be disappointed! It is an opportunity to grow more in your relationship with Jesus. After all, Jesus Himself spent 40 days in the wilderness!

Marisela Rodríguez-García



All Saints Day Prayer

Source: LoyolaPress

Bless the many parted souls
who lived their lives with grace.
Bless the saints in heaven,
gathered in that special place.

May we tell their stories
and remember all the ways
they lived their faith
and spent their days.

There is glory and reward,
even if at first there's strife.
Oh, blessed saints, you help us see
a path that's to eternal life.

May we always hold them dear
and know their life and place.
May we know their inspiration
and aspire to their grace.

