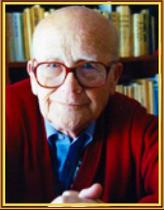


Jesus, I Trust in You

CURSILLOS

in CHRISTIANITY
National Newsletter



Servant of God

Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló

Founder of
Cursillos in Christianity
1917 – 2008

April 2024

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To Live Cursillo is to live the Gospel taught by the Catholic Church

National Cursillo Encounter, Creighton University, Omaha, NE

Presented by Fr. Jacob Carlin, July 2023

Good morning, my name is Fr. Jacob Carlin; I am a priest for the Diocese of Wichita in Kansas. I have been ordained for six years, and I currently serve as the priest assistant to Bishop Kemme. However, more directly related, I serve as the spiritual advisor for the Cursillo Movement in the Diocese of Wichita in English and Spanish. I am honored to speak to you today and to promote the authentic living out of the Cursillo movement. I am passionate about this topic because I have witnessed how the Cursillo movement has made an incredible positive impact on myself and many people in the Diocese of Wichita in helping them to live out the Gospel message taught by the Catholic Church. In fact, the purpose of my talk is to illustrate that the living out of the Cursillo movement is, in fact, to live out the Gospel.

I first encountered the Cursillo movement in a more specific way at my first parish assignment, St. Patrick in Wichita. When I arrived, I had a deep desire to know the people. I wanted to be part of their lives; I wanted to know about who they were, what motivated them, what types of challenges were they facing in their lives? All these questions were important, but most of all I had a desire to know: What has motivated you to live out your life of faith so authentically? I was intrigued by the fact that as I asked so many people to give testimony for their faith, repeatedly both in the English and Spanish speaking communities, the Cursillo movement had a huge impact on their faith life. I was impressed and I thought to myself, what is it about this movement? I had lived the Cursillo 3 day weekend a year before as a transitional deacon, and I had thoroughly enjoyed my experience, but I was intrigued to know that the influence of the Cursillo movement had spread farther in the diocese of Wichita than I had imagined. So, I started to investigate. Little did I know that a simple investigation would lead to me being the spiritual advisor, maybe it was a trick, I think it was all part of God's plan.

I had two great mentors in the Cursillo Movement, a priest by the name of Fr. Jerry Beat, and a layman by the name of Manuel Esperza, may the both rest in peace. These men helped me to develop an authentic knowledge of the movement that avoided any pitfalls or misinterpretation of the purpose of the Cursillo movement. The specific PURPOSE of Cursillo, the Manual tells us, is to save souls and structure Christianity in the world. I was drawn to this this simple, yet profound mission. How basic and straightforward. We seek to save souls. However, if we are to save souls, we have found it that a particular structure or methodology can be helpful. As I studied and learned more about the structure of the Cursillo movement and the methods that it employs to lead souls to Christ. Looking at this structure and methodology, I see the Gospel in every aspect and would like to share my insights into why each part of the structure is important to living out the Catholic Faith and the Gospel mandate to: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold I am with you always, to the close of the age. This is the heart of the Gospel, and this is the mission of our movement. I entrust these words to our patron, St. Paul, the great evangelizer and proclaimer of the Gospel.

Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ. Although this phrase can feel somewhat stereotypical or like an overused phrase for us, I have become convinced that this simple saying

can help us to authentically live the Gospel. Jesus came to the world, and the first thing that he did was to befriend people. By his captivating personality and his intentionality in all things, he desired to cultivate authentic friendship with people. Jesus wanted followers, but more than that he wanted friends. "I no longer call you slaves, but friends." Jesus modelled for us this method of friendship. Befriending people in all types of environment whether they were fisherman, tax collectors, Pharisees, rich, poor, or anything in between. Then, he would be a friend to them. He would do what was in his power to help them in their difficult situations. I think that we think of Jesus' relationships with his disciples to be clear cut and perfect, but the reality is that these relationships would have been difficult and messy. No friendship is straight forward. But, we can't simply make friends, we have to be willing to go the extra mile and be a friend. This means investing in the well being of another person. Taking interest in their lives and supporting them. We see how he would heal those who were sick, even save the party at the Wedding of Cana, how he would be patient with his disciples when they lost their way. How he would forgive them and help them to see the right way. He was never harsh or judgmental, but he helped people to raise their standards and to live upright and holy lives. In that cultivating of friendship, he naturally brought souls to God. I think we often think that if we say the right thing, if we prepare the right argument, if we give the best talk, etc. then we will convince people to live out the Gospel. However, I think our living out of true Christian charity, giving without counting the cost, loving when it is hard, and bringing hope and encouragement to places is the real way to win souls for Christ. However simple this methodology may sound, it is actually quite complex and difficult. If it were easy, the whole world would be doing it. We would not have any inactive Cursillistas, and we wouldn't have to keep learning more and more. These national encounters would not even be necessary because everyone would already have it down. But no, we make mistakes sometimes, we need help, we need new and fresh ideas, we need companions on the journey and we need grace most of all. In order to live out this methodology is to live out the Gospel mandate to make disciples. If we are to do that, we need strong supports. The Cursillo movement, as we know, proposes to us three pillars of the tripod of Christian life, and they are so utterly necessary for each of us.

Piety, is the first of the pillars. I purposely talk about this one first because the life of piety is at the heart of the Christian life. It is what keeps us in friendship with God, it is what unites us to him. We purposely use the word piety because it implies an important point. The life of piety consists of the sacraments and personal prayer. The sacraments are the life blood of the Church. They are a sure and certain fount for the grace of God to be active in our lives. They are where we encounter the living God. Where he becomes present to us body, blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist. They are where we experience his unconditional love and forgiveness in confession. These are certainly irreplaceable, essential aspects of the Christian life. However, we can regularly participate in the sacraments and still struggle to live out the Christian life. I am convinced it is when we lack a life of personal prayer. Because my personal prayer is where I spend time reflecting, pondering, meditating, evaluating. It is there is the presence of God that the sacraments can take root in my life. The imitation of Christ or lack

thereof, becomes more evident when I spend time in his loving presence. So, these sacraments and devotions both play an integral role in the spiritual life, they help to strengthen me, to challenge me, to keep me alert and aware to my living out of the Christian life. They help me to be in right relationship with God and to avoid becoming self reliant. You may know that the most popular selling genre of literature right now in the United States is self help. We have become convinced that if we try harder, and persevere, we will eventually find success. But, the Christian realizes and admits our complete and utter dependence on God. His presence in our lives is irreplaceable, and when we try to replace it we constantly hit the obstacles to the life of grace be they the flesh, the world, or the devil. This pillar of the Christian life is helps us first and foremost to be a friend with Christ. If I am not a friend of Christ, how can I possibly bring others to him?

This life of prayer impels me, pushing me on towards living a life of Christian action. Let us recall the Gospel mandate that I shared with you in my opening remarks. It is not the Gospel suggestion or challenge. It is a mandate. This message that we have, the light in the darkness, the hope for the hopeless, the rest for the weary, is meant to be shared. No one who has a lamp hides it under the bushel basket. It is meant to be proclaimed from the rooftops. It is a privilege to be invited into the mission of Christ who seeks to bring all souls to eternal life. This action is certainly a key aspect of the Cursillo movement. Although palanca is the most powerful tool in the Cursillo movement, I cannot simply pray someone into the Christian life. We see Jesus model this action for us. We see that he is intentional and deliberate about offering personal invitations to his followers. Although many catch wind of his efforts and are intrigued and interested in his message and works, his primary form of drawing others to himself is individually. We know this to be important for our Cursillo methodology, in this we imitate the Gospel. This is why we avoid impersonal things like announcements after Mass or publishing in parish bulletins especially if they are to the detriment of me reaching out to someone and saying "I thought of you, we miss you, or I thought of you, would you be interested in living the Cursillo weekend." This action is so important to "being a friend." It is by my action that I give credence to my words. When I tell someone I love them and care about them, it is important that my actions portray the same message. This action brings people into deeper relationship with us and then allows us to help lead and guide them to deeper relationship with God. I would like to note here that our action should always be intentional, deliberate, and determined, but it should not be pushy or overbearing. This message of the Gospel is meant to be a beautiful thing that invites people to something more meaningful and fulfilling. It is not meant to be something that makes them feel like they are forced into it or told they are bad if they do not.

Study is perhaps the most forgotten of the pillars of the Cursillo movement. Maybe I am the only one but when I do my group reunion or grouping at the Ultreya, School of Leaders, or Secretariat, I always find my most often admitted shortcoming is in the area of study. It seems that it is no big deal, but it is not called a pillar for nothing. See, the living out of the Christian life is difficult. If I am going to learn how to cultivate a more authentic life of prayer, and if I am to persevere in my action in the apostolate, it is important to study. This study helps me to

grow continually. Without this, our life of prayer or action can become stagnant. I wonder why my methods and routines are no longer serving the purpose they once fulfilled, but I haven't tried or learned anything new in who knows how long. The pillar of study informs, illuminates, strengthens, and challenges the pillars of prayer and action. No stage of life is the same. Some things that worked for me before will not work for my living out of the Christian life later. The circumstances of life change, my environment takes a shift, outside factors influence me or obstacles present themselves. Study helps us to be ready to overcome these things, helps us to persevere through challenges and to adapt when necessary. This rings true as well for trying to bring others to Christ. No two people are the same and no environment is exactly like another. One method of evangelizing that worked with one individual may not work with another. Study can often be neglected or forgotten but I think that this causes us to be stagnant, fall into "well that is how we have always done it," and hampers our progress in the Christian life.

I don't claim this to be an exhaustive overview of these important pillar, but I want them to serve as a reminder of the importance of each of these three pillars of the Christian life. Both individually and as a whole being interrelated. This are the supports that hold up our particular methodology of making a friend, being a friend, and bringing a friend to Christ.

Group Reunion- The group reunion is so important in the Cursillo movement that I cannot iterate strongly enough how essential it is. Eduardo Bonin says that the purpose or goal of the three day weekend is to incorporate people into a group reunion. It is so important that we make time for this important endeavor and take it seriously. I could get into all the important aspects of a group reunion, but I want to mostly focus on how it relates to the Gospel. When Jesus sends out the seventy two disciples to go and proclaim the Gospel, he tells them to take nothing with them. No money bag, no sandals, no extra tunic. However, he does not send them alone he sends them out two by two. This Christian life is not lived in isolation it is lived in community. When I have others around me not only do I imitate the life and love of the Trinity, but it has practical benefits. When I have another person around, they can often share new insights or perspectives, they can challenge me even where I am not aware that I need to change, they can support me when I feel weak, and encourage me when I feel down. This type of trusted support is irreplaceable and it helps us to be held accountable. When I go to my group reunion, I don't want to tell them time and time again that my prayer life is failing, or that I haven't taken any apostolic action, or that I haven't studied so as to grow. This type of group helps me to take initiative, to be a bit more motivated, to take the pillars more seriously. Man is not an Island. God made us and created us for community, it is so important to live it in this tight knit, trustworthy group. On a personal note, I can testify to the importance of this. I do my grouping with another priest and we have done so for over five years now maybe missing once or twice that whole time. He is now assigned two hours away from me and has been for over a year. But, each week, we both drive a two hour round trip to do our grouping, because we know how important it is.

Ultreya- The Ultreya is the getting together of the various group reunions. If we are doing our grouping correctly then we will certainly be aware of God's work, the work of the Holy Spirit in

our lives. From this should naturally spring forth testimony. The testimony in the Ultreya is important for many reasons. We should always be ready to give reason for our Faith as St. Paul tells us. If we are going to bring others to Christ we have to be able to give testimony. This testimony is so important. It is good for me to hear the testimony of others because sometimes, it is hard for me to see how God is active in my life. But, when I hear it from others it makes me more alert and aware. It is also important to prudently give testimony for my struggles. This lets people know that they are not alone, it helps them realize that not everyone else has it all together or doesn't struggle with anything. Then the echo helps us to connect and to go more deeply into relationship and realize that we share so many similar experiences and feelings. The Ultreya is a time to build community, to build up the life "de colores" and to recall all the many graces of God at work in the good times and in the bad times. The gathering of the group reunions is a way to stay connected and to share in the joy of living the Christian life.

School of Leaders- The School of leaders relates specifically, my opinion, to the pillar of Study. Many confuse the school of leaders as something that is optional, if we have time for it. Or they think that it is only for those who plan to help with the three day weekend. But, to the contrary, it is an essential aspect of the post Cursillo that should not be ignored. The School of leaders is a key tool to the authentic living out of the Cursillo movement. There is no way that everything to be known about the Cursillo can be learned in the three day weekend. We have to keep learning and growing. Also the school of leader has many important functions like helping to form the secretariat and other important tasks. I hope that each everyone takes the school of leaders seriously. I understand the challenges. In fact, it has proved difficult for us in the Diocese of Wichita in the English movement due to geographical challenges. But, we are trying, because we don't want to forget this important aspect of growth. The school of leaders is the place where growth is cultivated, where we are formed, molded, where we discuss together the future of the Cursillo movement and make a plan for evangelization. From the school of leaders comes our vision, it is where we are reminded time and time again of our mission and how to live out the key aspects of that mission. The Cursillo movement has always been about forming leaders. The movement is not looking for people who desire to sit back and conform to the world. We want people willing to be different, willing to face the challenge to take charge and to be witnesses. I hope that more people will take seriously this role of being a leader, being apostles, proclaiming that the kingdom of God is at hand.

Grace- planting seeds. My brothers and sisters, wow, that can all be a bit daunting. To recap. The methodology of the Cursillo movement is to make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ. The pillars that support this methodology that are essential separately and as a whole are piety, action, and study. And the essential forms of accountability and growth of living out the Christian life in community are the group reunion, the ultreya, and the school of leaders. Please, please do not forget. The primary force, the primary cause of conversion in the Christian life, is Grace. With God, all things are possible, without him, we can do nothing. I want to take us back to this past weekend's Gospel that we heard from St. Matthew. Remember the seed being scattered and sown. We think of farmers when we think of this parable.

A farmer can be the very best at his profession. He can pick the perfect ground, till the ground perfectly, and plant the best seed. But, there is still something outside of his control. He still depends on sunlight and moisture to yield a group crop. No matter how much he would like to or how much he tries, he cannot control every aspect of his success. So is evangelization in the Christian life, so it is as we make friends, be friends, and try to bring those friends to Christ. The primary work is God's. He is in control and bringing about his plan in mysterious ways. Please,

please, never lose hope, never doubt the goodness of God who is working the good for all who love them. I can assure you that if you choose to live out the Cursillo movement in its authentic nature, then you will live the Gospel taught by the Catholic Church. They are intertwined and inseparable. May we build up the Body of Christ with our unique gifts and be his tireless instruments in the world imitating him and living in holiness.

De Colores.

Hello & Hafa Adai!

My name is Carmen Carlyn Cruz Taisacan, I am 42 years old, A Pacific Islander born and raised from the Island of Saipan, in the Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands. I am the daughter of late +Gregorio & +Bernadita Dela Cruz and the youngest of their ten children. I spent most of my childhood days in our beautiful beach farm in Lau Lau Bay. My father was a hardworking farmer and carpenter and my mother spent most of her life volunteering at the youth and elderly centers. I graduated at Marianas High School with the Advanced Development Institute Program.

I am married to my wonderful husband Jonathan Phillip D. Taisacan, Retired Carpentry Engineer in the United States Army for 20 years. He is now the Catholic Pastoral Life Coordinator at Ft. Cavazos, Texas giving back what our beautiful Lord has blessed him with throughout his military life. I have four children, 3 sons and 1 daughter. My first born, Cameron Austin, is 26 years old & joined the United States Air Force as Crew Chief in February 2024 and recently married to his beautiful wife Aurion and will be on their way to their first duty station- Italy in May 2024. My Second Born, Joleo Jamau is 20 years old and joined the United States Air Force as Security Forces who is currently stationed in Japan. My Youngest Son, Ryan Junior, 17 years old is a Senior this year and will be graduating in May 2024, and will be off to college studying business or maybe go off as Military Chaplain/Priest? I am praying that one of my sons hear our Lord's calling to Priesthood. Lastly, my youngest and only daughter, 15 years old, Peleni Thalyn Gli, a freshman at the Early College High School at Fort Cavazos. She will be graduating high school with her Associates in 3 years. My family evolves around my life, with Jesus in the center of our Lives.

I made my Cursillo weekend last year in April 2023. And since then, DeColores and the Blessed Mother statue that was there at the back of the center, stayed in my heart and mind. All I could think of is what's next? I wanted to do more. Why was I introduced to this weekend? In the past Deacon Fred would bring up Cursillo weekend and I never paid any attention until last year. I kept going around asking the ladies at Church "You going to Cursillo weekend right?" "I invited everyone to go not knowing what Cursillo is, I wasn't sure if I wanted to go but then I realized the ladies said YES without hesitation. Jesus do not play when he says "Follow Me." Matthew Chapter 16:24.

At the time I worked for Killeen Independent School District for 6 years as a Principal Secretary and work part time at the Military Exchange as a vendor. I work Monday to Saturday and Sunday I spend most of the day at Church. I am the Coordinator of the Care Team/Prayer Warriors and EMHC ministry at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. A 1st Grade Catechist teacher and I assist with the Youth Group as well. My life is always busy, I don't have an off-switch button. Back to the question "What is Next?" I prayed for a Job that I can always spiritually express myself and maybe help me slow down a little a bit. God has always been so patient with me and takes his time on me. When I was told that a job opened up for the National Cursillo Center as Office Manager, again I did not really pay attention to it. Let me tell you, God really knows how to get you at the right moment and how he works through others to get to you; long story short, I met Patrick for the first time when he walked into the school I worked at with his wife to pick up his grand kids because they attended school there. Then later the following week, I met Patrick again at the Ultreya meeting. Then at SOL, he came to me and asked me if I was interested in the position and that I should apply before it closes. I just thought to myself no I am not ready and I need to learn more about Cursillo. Again, Our Blessed Mother did not say "I need time", She said YES right away. At that moment I applied for the position, I allowed Jesus to take care of everything else after that. I got my first interview, and anyone that knows me very well, I am easy to get along with. I felt so comfortable, normally I am a nervous wreck when it comes to interviews. I am not good at representing myself but meeting the team and Father Mark Seiker, it's like we knew each other for a while. I felt the Holy Spirit was with me that night before my interview and when I said YES and accepted this job. I TRULY BELIEVE THAT GOD WORKED THROUGH ALL THESE PEOPLE & OUR BLESSED MOTHER TO GET TO ME BECAUSE I PRAYED FOR THIS. WHEN EVER YOU SEE SOMEONE OR KNOW SOMEONE IN NEED RIGHT IN FRONT OF, YOU DO NOT HESITATE. IT'S HIM telling you to Make a friend, Be a friend, and Bring a friend to Christ. Trust his plan for you because he knows what's to come of you.

I am excited for what Cursillo has for me.

De Colores!

NCSA Announcements:

1. Introduction of our New National Cursillo Center **Office Manager Carmen Carlyn Cruz Taisacan**
2. **2024 Eucharistic Congress:** The Cursillo Movement as a member of the The Movements and New Communities in the US, will have a very special moment of worship and sharing of our charisms in this congress. We will be holding a workshop.

It will take place on **Friday, July 19, from 2:45 to 4:00 PM., at the ICC, (Indiana Convention Center)**, in a room with a capacity of around 600 people. (ICC Indianapolis)

The title of the workshop is:

Building Bridges for our Shared Mission: Connecting Parishes with Movements and New Communities

Motivation to attend the workshop:

All are invited to come together at the National Eucharistic Congress to get to know one another, share experiences, and explore ways to build bridges for the growth of the Church and for our shared mission of evangelization and service.

The featured speakers will be Bishop Joseph Espaillat, from the Archdiocese of New York, and Bishop Evelio Menjivar, from the Archdiocese of Washington, the Episcopal Moderator of MovComUS, sponsor of this Special Event, with music and witnesses from several movements and new communities, parishes, and dioceses.

Nourished by His Body and Blood we are sent out in mission. Let us do it together!

Soon the info about our workshop will be active on the Congress website and on www.movcom.us.

Register for the National Eucharistic Congress.



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To approach the Plan that, from the Foundation we propose to the world, requires resources that we can all contribute towards, that we can all bring to the table, requires the involvement of as many people as possible and with whom to gather the necessary the necessary means to tackle the enormous work in a powerful, efficient robust, efficient and orderly and orderly manner.



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Registration is now open at
www.natl-cursillo.org

