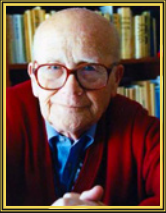


# ALLELUIA

**CURSILLOS**  
*CHRISTIANITY*  
*National Newsletter*



Servant of God

**Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló**

Founder of

Cursillos in Christianity

1917 – 2008

*April 2026*

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[National Newsletter](#)

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[THE FOLLOWING ARE HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF CURSILLO, AS WRITTEN BY EDUARDO BONNIN IN HIS SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT. OVER THE YEARS, SEVERAL POPES HAVE ENCOURAGED ECCLESIAL MOVEMENTS, INCLUDING CURSILLO, TO STUDY THE LIFE OF THEIR FOUNDER, THEIR CHARISM, AND THE HISTORY OF THEIR MOVEMENT.]

## **Historical Clarifications of the True Origins of Cursillo, Its Ideas, and Founding Charism**

### **How did the idea of the “Study of the Environment” occur to me?**

The original seed of the idea of Cursillo grew out of the conflict within me when the education I had received from the family environment that I had always lived in collided with the environment at the barracks when, at the age of 18, I entered military service. This lasted 9 years, during which I was a private, like everyone else, and not in secondary services.

There, completely different values were lived, quite opposed to those that had been my light and guidance since my youth. This shock, continuously proven in my life at the barracks, prompted me to think: do these people feel weighed down by the Law, or do they ignore the Doctrine?

For a great many reasons, I came to the conclusion that, rather than feeling weighed down by the Law they had no idea of the Doctrine; no idea of the Truth; this Truth which, if we believe it with faith and practice it with joy, makes us free men and women. Most of them had a wrong and fearful concept of religion.

For them, religion was just a series of prohibitions placed upon them, which hindered their lives and prevented them from using the freedom they could enjoy according to their own whim, especially now that they lived so far away from their family environment.

The barracks were located close to the heart of the red-light district of our City of Palma, and collective visits to brothels were frequent. At night, upon returning to the barracks, their conversations were extremely interesting, almost always revolving around their frequent incursions into that environment of vice.

I never liked to raise important questions before a group of people; I always thought it was much better to speak heart to heart, from one person to another, so that a constructive dialogue could start, where the possibility of reaching an understanding and even of starting a new friendship is much higher.

I always tried and sometimes managed to get a private talk with the leader of the clique, and I almost always did it in the same way, i.e., by asking:

“Did you have a nice time?” The answer was always the same: “Yes”, but I insisted: “Did you really enjoy it a lot, very much?” The response would be: “Well, you know....”; and when we reached the intimate, personal and confidential level, he used to say: “I cannot stop thinking about my fiancée and how upset my mother would be if they knew about these adventures of mine and besides, if I am to be honest, I will tell you that after this type of adventure there is no peace in me”.

So, in the end, I spent all my extensive time at the barracks trying to find out what people were like, and I concluded that at the center, at the very center, everybody is the same. This spurred my desire to dig deeper into the core of Christianity and my almost instinctive usual urge to read focused now on the books whose authors at the time were at the crest of the wave of the Christian world: Hugo Rahner, Karl Rahner, Fr. Plus, the husband and wife Raïssa and

Jacques Maritain, Karl Roggers, Maslow, Leon Bloy, Van de Meer of Malcheren, Rene Schwob, Gustavo Thibon, Erich Fromm, Jacques Leclerc, etc.

Then, a letter entitled, “H.H. Pius XII and Catholic Action” came into my hands and I read a paragraph which reads literally, “It is the duty of the parish priest, with a quick and agile look at the dual aspect of his parishioners, to form a clear and carefully detailed picture, we would say topographically, street by street, of his community. On the one hand, the population of the faithful, especially its outstanding members, which could bring out the elements to promote Catholic Action within the community, and on the other hand, the groups that had moved away from the practice of Christian life. They are also sheep that belong to the parish; lost sheep, and also for these particularly, you are responsible custodians, my dearest children, and as good pastors you must not avoid any effort or work to find them and win them over again, nor must you indulge in any rest until all of them have found safety, life and joy in the return to the fold of Christ. (Address to the parish priests and Lenten preachers in Rome, on February 6, 1940).

That letter, which I wanted to transcribe in its entirety, had an unusual effect on me and brought me to the decision that the most important thing to start with was to have at our disposal, as the Pope advised, a “detailed study” of the situation. That conclusion led me to examine each of the constellations of individuals in the world, in my world, and in the Church that I knew and frequented.

Then I also felt it necessary and appropriate to observe each of the individuals separately to find out, for example, what the young soldier was like, and I thought: “He obeys his officers because he cannot do otherwise, he grumbles and murmurs behind their backs because he cannot bear any more”. I carried on in this way, trying to get an idea of what the young student, the young worker, the young undergraduate, the young clerk, and so on, were like. All this, as I said before, was aimed at obtaining the most accurate possible idea of the real truth of the matter.

From all this, in 1943, the “Study of the Environment” was born, marking the origin of all that came afterwards.

### **The history of what happened between the “Study of the Environment” and the first three-day Cursillo in history.**

It was a matter of choosing and selecting what constitutes the core of the Christian life and spirit, and with the selected index cards of all I was reading and the underlined passages in books, I had to arrange the material collected and sort it out in an attractive, dynamic and direct way so that it could enter into the heart of the listeners, but to tell the truth I could not think of the most effective way to communicate it.

Exposing ideas by calling people to meet at a certain place to listen to me attentively and with interest seemed to me utopian and unthinkable. I did not belong to Catholic Action, but I used to attend their meetings, which I never liked, and which led me to be critical of the people who attended them.

However, after attending the Cursillo I will talk about below, I was given the post of chairman of the Diocesan Council of Youth.

But something happened that made me think. My aforementioned “Study of the Environment” had leaked out to several people and, for this reason, I was invited by the Rector of the diocesan seminary, Fr. Jose Rosell Santomá, to present it to the seminarians. I went there on the 8th of December 1945. It was the first time I spoke in public, and, to tell the truth, it had an impact on the audience.

At that time, the Youth Branch of Catholic Action was totally focused and devoted to the preparations for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. The National President, Manuel Aparici, had launched the idea of gathering 100,000 young people in Santiago who lived in the Grace of God.

Supporting his idea, the leaders of the Higher Council spent their Easter and Christmas holidays visiting the various Diocesan Councils in Spain to encourage young people to attend the great meeting in Compostela. They did it by giving short courses which they called “Cursillos for Pilgrim leaders”, seeking candidates in parochial schools and Diocesan Councils. At these Cursillos, which lasted a week, they explained topics like: “Youth Catholic Action”, “Christian Life”, “Grace”, “Organization”, “The Hispanic World”, and so on.

The person who, at that time, was the chairman of the Diocesan Youth of Catholic Action in Mallorca invited me to the first of these Cursillos, but I did not want to go because I did not feel like going, and I made some “reasonable” excuses to get out of it.

But I attended the second one, which took place at Easter of 1943. I liked the atmosphere of camaraderie I could sense there, and the spirit and cheerful mood with which lessons or lectures were put forward.

I was sent as one of the leaders to the Cursillo for Pilgrim leaders that came later, and I was told to add an explanation of the rollo “Study of the Environment.”

I learned a lot from these Cursillos and, what is more, I found there the solution to what had always worried me, which was: how to explain the ideas I wanted to pass on to others and make them known to people with some chance of effectiveness. I realized then that what had always been my main concern could be solved by gathering people in a closed and isolated environment, and that this was the best way to achieve what I wanted. I learned there that people should be distributed in groups, making posters, and trying to get as many as possible involved. All this I discovered at those Cursillos.

What I did not like about the Cursillos for Pilgrims was that they lasted a week, because I thought that in this way only a very limited audience could be gathered: students at Christmas, Easter, and in the summer, or people prepared to use a few days of their vacation to live this experience.

So, after much prayer and seeking people willing to pray for the idea, much thinking, planning, and structuring, collecting and selecting again all the material accumulated on index cards, notes, and underlined passages in books, we managed to gather a few candidates. We took the chance of planning a “new” Cursillo together with Jose Ferragut, who had

been Diocesan President, Jaime Riutord, and this Christian who writes and endorses this story, and to whom he was appointed rector.

This was the first “Cursillo Three-Day Weekend”, and although we called it “Cursillo for Pilgrim Leaders”, because we would not have been allowed to hold it under any other name, they were not in the least bit like those with the same name that had been held in Mallorca up to then.

This happened in 1944. We needed to find suitable premises. To do so, we went to the parish priest of Santanyí, Fr. Pedro Sureda, one of our friends who had given us some spiritual retreats. He told us that there was a Mrs. Granells who had a chalet in Cala Figuera, and on repeated occasions she had put it at the disposal of the parish. Catechists and seminarians used to go there with some frequency to spend a few days on vacation. So, the issue of the premises was solved. All we had to do now was find a way to gather everything necessary to feed the people.

The Center for Catholic Action in Felanitx, and especially its president, Francisco Adrover, found some candidates for us and provided us with a cook and a cart to transport the food. Someone brought a loaf, another brought a “sobrasada” (sausage), rice, a chicken, etc. We settled ourselves in as best we could, the leaders sleeping on the floor. There was no electricity in the house, and we had to use a “petromax” (a light used by fishermen).

So, relying on the prayers of many and the collaboration of a few, we set out into the adventure of doing a Cursillo on our own. We gave it the name “Cursillo for Pilgrim Leaders”, but in reality, although we talked about Santiago, because we had to talk about Santiago, it was completely different from the Catholic Action Cursillos. We had thought of a different structure. What concerned us was to be able to

present the ideas that we had selected with so much interest in a concrete, sharp, refined, and straightforward manner. All this with the aim of spreading the ideals of Christ in a warm, sincere, friendly, and festive atmosphere, sprinkling the rollos with anecdotes that we had carefully collected.

We needed a priest to explain the spiritual rollos and take care of the spiritual direction for the weekend. Fr. Juan Juliá, an army priest, had on several occasions given us some lectures on Catholic Action, and we went to explain our plan to him. He agreed. All the material we had then, relevant to the duty of the priest at the Cursillo, came from the schedules of the Cursillos for Pilgrim leaders, and we gave them to him. He had to improvise and play it by ear, and he was unable to attend any preliminary meeting.

With great faith in God, the prayers of many, and the sacrifice of a few, we launched into the adventure. The result was the one promised by Christ to those who, believing in His promises, perform what He taught with an ardent faith, expecting everything from Him, in an atmosphere of fraternal and sincere charity.

We knew then, and thank God we have never forgotten, what we were after and what we wanted to achieve. We were very clear about what, thanks to God, has always remained clear to us: that the Gospel is true and that if it is brought into the life, the heart and the intelligence of every person who believes in Christ and really opens up to His Truth, responding to His grace, it has a power capable of overwhelming even the most hesitant with enthusiasm.

The aim of Cursillo is to present the truth of Christ in a concise way, emphasizing the most important thing, i.e., His resurrection, and the fact that He loves each of us in particular and personally, and that He is present when two or more are gathered together in His name.

## Announcements from NCSA

- Registration for the 36th National Cursillo Encounter in Wheaton Illinois is open. Congratulations to the first 39 cursillistas who are registered! We await each and every person who will register next with great hope for all of us to experience a deeper conversion and greater unity in the Cursillo Movement. The cursillistas of Region V are planning with great enthusiasm for us to have a great Encounter!

This year in addition to paying by check or credit card, ZELLE payments are also accepted. Use the tag: natlcursillo ph: (512) 720-8109 or scan this QR Code.

On the registration form use the option that says “check” and in the ZELLE memo write National Encounter 2026 Registration for “Name & Last Name”.

- We have been having difficulties with our phones. Until we correct this, please know that you might not hear a ring or dial tone but if you wait we will answer or you can leave a message.
- Shipments of books using the United States Postal Service (USPS) have been unusually delayed. Their shipping policy has changed and this is affecting the time it takes to deliver. We advise that you anticipate this when ordering whenever possible.



## SERVING AS REGIONAL COORDINATOR

**M**y name is Yolanda Ramírez. I lived my Cursillo in March 1986, an experience that profoundly shaped my life and awakened in me a calling to serve God through the Cursillos in Christianity Movement.

Six months after living my Cursillo, I began my formation at the School of Leaders, where I started to become actively involved in the movement. Since then, I have had the opportunity to serve in different roles, working as an assistant, a rollista, a rector, and serving on the Secretariat for three terms.

During this time, I was called to serve as Diocesan Coordinator, which represented a period of great personal and spiritual growth. God granted me the blessing of participating in national, regional, and international encounters, including meaningful experiences in countries such as Portugal, the United States, and Italy.

I currently serve as the Spanish-speaking Coordinator for Region VIII. This role has been a great source of enrichment in my life, as it allows me to remain active within the Movement and contribute to strengthening our evangelizing mission. The region comprises 12 active Spanish-speaking dioceses, representing a broad scope for work and collaboration.

This service has given me the opportunity to continue my formation, deepen my understanding of the Cursillo charism, and develop various roles within the Movement. It has also allowed me to build close relationships with communities, regional coordinators, and spiritual advisors from various dioceses, thereby strengthening communion and unity within the Cursillo Movement.

Upcoming events include the Regional Encounter scheduled for April 2026, as well as the Regional Encounter in October of the same year. Each of these encounters represents an opportunity for growth, learning, and renewal in our mission.

In our work, we have also succeeded in engaging dioceses that previously had no ties to the region, as well as in accompanying others that, although they have experienced Cursillos, need to renew their commitment to the charism. This ongoing work invites us to faithfully live out the grace we have received, putting into practice the three pillars of piety, study, and action—essential elements for fully living our Fourth Day.

This entire journey is a constant adventure, aligned with the lifestyle that Cursillo proposes to us: living the Gospel every day, with authenticity and commitment. We move forward hand in hand with Jesus, trusting in Mary's intercession and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We give thanks to God for the gift of the Cursillos in Christianity Movement and for the witness of its founder, Eduardo Bonnín, whose inspiration continues to bear fruit in our lives and communities.

De Colores!

Yolanda Ramírez  
Regional Coordinator - Region VIII

Dear Friends in Christ,

Peace be with you.

Each year, the Feast of the Annunciation invites us into a moment of profound stillness, one that changed the course of human history forever. It is a quiet scene, almost hidden from the world's eyes: a young woman, a simple home, and a message from heaven.



The angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary was unlike any other: "*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you.*" (Luke 1:28) In that moment, all of salvation history seemed to hold its breath.

Mary's response is just as striking as the message she received. Faced with a mystery beyond comprehension, she does not fully understand, but she trusts. "*Let it be done to me according to your word.*" (Luke 1:38)

With those words, everything changed.

The Annunciation is not only about what God did in Mary. It is about what God desires to do in each of us. God does not force his way into our lives. He invites, he waits, and he asks for our "yes."

Mary's fiat reminds us that holiness is not found in having all the answers, but in surrendering to God's will with humility and courage. She shows us that even the smallest, most hidden acts of trust can carry eternal significance.

In a world that often celebrates control, self-sufficiency, and certainty, the Annunciation calls us to something different: openness, receptivity, and faith.

Where is God inviting your "yes" today?

Perhaps it is in a difficult relationship, a hidden sacrifice, or a quiet calling you have been hesitant to embrace. Like Mary, we may not see the full picture, but we can trust the One who does.

As we reflect on this beautiful mystery, may we ask for the grace to echo Mary's words in our own lives: "*Let it be done.*"

If you are longing to deepen your understanding of the faith that shapes these sacred moments, I invite you to explore *Foundations of Faith: A Journey Through the Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It is a meaningful way to grow in clarity, confidence, and love for the truths we profess.

Be assured of my prayers for you and your family.

In Christ,

Edward Sri  
<https://www.edwardsri.com/>

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

Over-embellishing Cursillos in Christianity, by saturating it with activities, excessive fervor, or superficial details, disrupts its natural atmosphere, distracts from the central message, and leads to a lack of rest. Simplicity is lost, turning an experience of direct encounter with Christ into an overload of events that dilutes the essence of friendship and grace.

The Cursillo should be a simple life experience that fosters personal encounter, where less is more to allow the Spirit to act.

Over-embellishing it or overloading the experience is considered a methodological error that can distort its essence.

When too many external elements, extra activities, or overly complicated language are added, the following consequences often occur:

**Loss of Naturalness:** The natural, simple atmosphere that should prevail each day is disrupted, interfering with the flow of the Cursillo.

**Distraction and Exhaustion:** An excess of activities wears out both the candidates and the leaders, preventing deep reflection and adequate rest.

**Obscuring the Essential:** There is a risk that “embellishments” (forms, added rituals, or sentimentality) will obscure the fundamental message or Kerygma: the personal encounter with a living and present Christ.

**Artificiality:** Cursillo seeks to help the person be authentic and genuine; if it becomes overloaded, the experience can feel manufactured or manipulated rather than a process of freedom and conviction.

**Distorting the Method:** The leaders’ manuals warn that unnecessary modifications and “embellishments” are ways of distorting the original method, which was designed to allow Grace to act directly.

The key to a successful Cursillo is to keep it simple, clear, and normal, avoiding anything that distracts from the main objective: for the Cursillista to discover his or her potential and God’s love in daily life.

*Source: FEBA webpage*



The first step to the 36th Cursillo National Encounter is Palanca. We call on all Cursillistas to offer prayer and sacrifice for the apostolic success of the gathering of friends to further our conversion and strengthen the unity of our National Cursillo Movement.

The second step is Registration. It is now open.

We will gather **Thursday, July 23rd to Sunday, July 26th at Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL**, in the suburbs of Chicago only 35-minutes on average from Chicago O’Hare Airport. A limited number of beds are on hold so **REGISTER EARLY** to ensure you have a spot! This year several payment plans are available.

Option to pay in full during registration period.

- › The Full Encounter Fee \$550 or Commuter Fee \$400 Full Payment for Registration made until June 15th
- › \$50 additional fee for payment plans
- › After June 15th \$50 additional fee
- › Add-ons for single room, additional day

Space is based on availability at time of registration. Cancellation prior to June 15th will incur \$50 processing fee. Cancellation after June 15th will be at full fee.

Cursillo has a contractual deadline to meet, hence, the absolute last day to register is **Wednesday, July 1st**.