



An Introduction to Understanding the Rector's Guide

Presented by Holly Wentworth, Region 1 Cursillo Coordinator, at the 36th National Cursillo Encounter held at Wheaton College in the Diocese of Joliet, July 23-26, 2026.

Please join me in saying the Holy Spirit Prayer: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit, and we shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The focus of this Rollo is to help us understand the Rector's Guide.

The Guide begins with "This is the Way," in the words of our founder, Eduardo Bonnín: "This [Rector's Guide] is the way to conduct the Cursillo today." This is the way through which, by the grace of God and the prayers of the brothers and sisters, it has been possible to achieve that a great many people over the years have had an encounter with Christ and decided to follow him. I do not know how the Cursillo will be conducted in the future.

We started in a place where there was no electricity, and today we hand out the list of those attending the Cursillo printed by computer. All I know is that if Cursillo is to remain faithful to the purpose for which it was intended and for which it was prayed and for which we have been grateful, it should not lower its target, and it should serve to give those who attend a "living", simple, clear, and true experience of the Christ of the Gospel as best as possible. He, who through his resurrection and by his Grace, is alive, normal, and close in each person.

This requires and calls for a personal encounter between Christ and each person. Obviously, the evil of the world is the evil of the human person, and what the person needs most is to encounter himself and then to be able to grasp with joy, and even perplexity, the invitation that Christ gives to him, so that by being connected to Him by Grace, and through that same Grace, he will understand the joy that comes from spreading it to others.

By its very nature, Cursillo must go deep down into the depths of the person, into his innermost and intimate self, not merely into the specific circumstances surrounding him: whether married or single, practicing or indifferent, etc. There must be nothing that might deflect him from the target at which he aims. The encounter must be between Christ and the person, face to face, one-on-one, and everything at the Cursillo has to be focused on that one-on-one encounter. The unavoidable reality of magnetism or attraction between the sexes, or the determining presence of a familiar person, such as professional, marital, or family bonds, makes this one-on-one encounter impossible. The reaction must be personal, radical, and authentic.

There should be nothing that prevents or hinders the radicalism, perplexity, and enthusiasm which occur in the person when he truly and earnestly **BELIEVES** that Christ loves him. Since at the Cursillo a new dimension of faith is discovered, much deeper than the normal one, things are different when the person is being observed by someone who is watching, awaiting his reaction. For this reason, the Cursillo should not be mixed; nor is it in any way appropriate that father and

son, mother and daughter, two brothers or sisters, employers and employees, or a married couple go to the same Cursillo together. If men and women go together on a weekend, no one will behave as they would if they went separately. Christ is looking for the person, not for what surrounds him.

Cursillo makes no assumptions. The person who really wants to be a Christian realizes the distance they have to go to actually become a true Christian. They become aware of the fact that they have to try to lessen that distance at every moment of their lives. The conscious Christian life led by the person who has awakened to the possibility of longing to become a true Christian impels them to thank God for every good thing that happens in their life. Knowing that Christ has us in mind and cares for us, we also learn to offer Him our bitter moments, which we sometimes make even more bitter because we ignore that what Christ wants is to temper us through them ... and make us better Christians. Provided everything at the Cursillo weekend is done as it should have been, in the end, everyone is truthful.

Introduction: The Rector's Guide was authored by Eduardo Bonnín.

He shared with the leaders in Mallorca, Spain, that this Guide is offered to the World Cursillo Movement to assist them in ensuring that the content of the Cursillo is simple, clear, and contains all that is necessary, nothing more and nothing less. Eduardo writes in his Spiritual Testament: "I sincerely believe that one of the greatest assets that I possess is the knowledge of what an authentic Cursillo of Christianity consists of, as well as the Movement engendered by them." In 1998, Saint Pope John Paul II invited all ecclesial movements and new communities to return to the roots of their movement, that is, to know their founder, know their charism, know their history, and discern the mentality of their founder. This "call back to our roots" was echoed in 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI and again in 2015 by Pope Francis in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Italian Cursillo Movement. The Rector's Guide was published in the US Cursillo Movement in June 2019. This rollo will provide a day-by-day and step-by-step introductory synopsis of the guide.

The Cursillo is described as living what is fundamental to being Christian. It facilitates three essential encounters that either start or strengthen conversion. The Rector's Guide incorporates theology and psychology to support the Cursillistas in freely encountering the Spirit of God. All Cursillistas are encouraged to read and contemplate **Appendix 16, "This is the Way," by Eduardo Bonnín**, which outlines the ideal way the Cursillo should be conducted. He offers a detailed schedule for the Cursillo, emphasizing that the time allocated for rollos, table group discussions, corridor activities, posters, and visits to the Blessed Sacrament must be preserved. The Cursillo weekend details are listed in the section on schedule and sequence.

Thursday Evening: Throughout this **first evening** of the Cursillo, it is important that the leaders get to know the new Cursillistas. The leader's attitude will influence the conversion process of the Cursillistas. Thursday evening provides the Cursillistas with an opportunity to reflect on their life and to "encounter self". This encounter is a vital first step to making the other two encounters with Christ and others. If the Cursillistas do not encounter themselves, it will be difficult to initiate the conversion process. Each Cursillista needs to encounter himself as he is, so he can encounter Christ as he is.

The team and candidates travel to the Cursillo location together when possible. Meeting and sharing a ride with friends or friends-in-the-making is a welcoming gesture and allows the team

and candidates the opportunity to get to know one another in an informal setting. The gathering of candidates, team, and 4th Day community helps candidates experience the sense of friendship they'll encounter at the Cursillo. The team and Spiritual Advisors visit the Blessed Sacrament prior to the start of the Cursillo.

The Rector welcomes everyone and then assigns the Cursillistas to their rooms. He explains that people who are acquainted with each other or who come from the same place have been assigned to separate rooms to make it easier for everyone to get to know everybody. The team, Cursillistas, and Spiritual Advisors move to the **Chapel** where the Preliminary Rollo is given by the Rector. The Rector explains the prayer to the Holy Spirit. Everyone is given a copy of the Pilgrim's Guide (PG). The first meditation, Know Yourself, is given after the preparatory prayer is said. After the meditation, the Rector prays the Thanksgiving prayer and then leads the Way of the Cross.

The Rector announces the Bankruptcy Story (**Appendix 2**), which is read by different team leaders while the Cursillistas have a snack or refreshments. The bankruptcy story is about characters with a desire for money, the pride of beauty, and the wasting of time, with themes of repentance, forgiveness, hope, and a new life in Christ. It helps the Cursillistas focus on introspection through possible identification with one or more of the characters. The Rector announces the second meditation, The Prodigal Son. The examination of conscience (**Appendix 3**) and night prayers follow. The Rector announces that the silent retreat will continue until after Mass Friday morning.

The Rector reviews the next day's activities and makes it known that a Priest is available for anyone who needs/wants to go to confession. Cursillistas retire to bed, and the team meeting follows. The team fills out the Quadrant Sheet and forms the table groups (**Appendix 5**), along with the heads and secretaries of each, which are chosen by the Rector and team. The main purpose of table heads and secretaries is to draw out the leadership qualities that the team has observed in the Cursillistas. The rector designates team leaders for the tasks of the following day. The team visits the Blessed Sacrament.

Day 1 – Friday: The morning prayers and offering of works [pages 19-23 of Pilgrims' Guide] are said in the Chapel, followed by the third meditation: The Three Glances of Christ, and then Mass. The Rector reads the introduction to the Mass on page 33 of the Pilgrims' Guide and the petitions from **Appendix 4**.

After Mass, the Rector gives thanks to God using the prayer on page 51 of the Pilgrims' Guide, followed by reading the Cantic of the Three Young Men (Book of Daniel Chapter 3-The Fiery Furnace), also on page 51 of the Pilgrims Guide. This marks the end of the silent retreat, and everyone goes to breakfast. The team serves all meals.

The table groups are formed. Refer to **Appendix 5 – We Form the Groups**. The Rector reads **Appendix 6 - Professor Cook's Story**. This story concludes with the Rector offering a few suggestions to help the Cursillistas live the Cursillo weekend more fully, and the Rector asks for a spirit of charity. The stories focus on the free will to choose faith.

The team goes to the chapel to pray for the rollista before every rollo. The first rollo, **Ideal** is given, and the **Hobbies Sheet** is filled out – See **Appendix 7**. The Rector reminds the Cursillistas to

organize the summaries and posters. Before the next rollo, an explanation of the origins of the **De Colores song** is given, and one or two verses are sung.

The **first Spiritual Advisor's Rollo – Habitual Grace** is given, followed by lunch. Next, the **Layperson: Christian in the World** rollo is given, followed by the **Actual Grace** rollo. Time is allowed for working on posters, and then everyone goes to dinner. After dinner, the **Piety** rollo is given, followed by the rector's intervention, which includes **The Skiing Story** from **Appendix 8 – Rector's Intervention**. This is followed by everyone visiting the Blessed Sacrament, and the Rector will read **Appendix 9**. Since this experience may be new for some Cursillistas, the Rector explains the **Real Presence of Jesus in the Tabernacle**. In a very natural manner, the Rector demonstrates a simple way of speaking with Jesus. The Cursillistas hear through the story the message of **"All this for me."**

The Reunion of the Table Groups follows. Make sure you read **Appendix 10 on the reunion of the table groups**. This is the time to present the summaries and posters. The Examination of Conscience and Night Prayers on page 65 of the Pilgrim's Guide are read. Afterward, the teams visit with the Heads and Secretaries (**Appendix 11**) and encourage them to take ownership of their tables. This is followed by the team leaders meeting to review the next day's activities. They conclude with a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

Day 2 – Saturday: The meditations and rollos of Day 2 provide opportunities for the Cursillistas to encounter Christ. The Holy Spirit helps them realize that God loves them as they are and where they are. This reality must sink into their hearts to become a personal conviction. This day focuses on what is fundamental to being Christian, confirming that growing in closer union with Christ can be the solution to all of life's problems.

The Cursillistas are presented with the opportunity for a personal encounter with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The leader's approach to the Cursillistas is one of understanding them, which helps assure that with this encounter, no matter where they are in life, the merciful, loving, and forgiving God is always there for them. This encounter facilitates living a life in Christ and His grace.

The morning prayers and offering of works (pages 19-23 of the Pilgrim's Guide) are said in the Chapel, followed by the fourth meditation, The Person of Christ, and then Mass and breakfast. The Rector reminds the Cursillistas that a Priest is available for those who want to go to confession or seek Spiritual Direction.

The **Study** rollo is given. The Rector explains the process for signing the Pilgrims' Guide, then he reads the **Story of John (Appendix 12)**. The beauty of this story is the simplicity of friendship with Jesus. Jesus knows our hearts, and our prayer may be simply saying "Lord, I am here." At this point, the Rector refers to the **General Palanca** received for the Cursillo. All Palanca for the Cursillo is "general" and is intended for all in the Cursillo. This is the first introduction of Palanca. The Palanca is displayed so everyone can read it. The Table Groups continue to make visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

The **Sacraments rollo** is given by the Spiritual Advisor. After this rollo, everyone moves to the Chapel to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. The visit is led by the Spiritual Advisor who gave the rollo. The Sacraments rollo is given late in the morning, just before lunch. The duration is 75 minutes. This rollo is not an in-depth study of the Sacraments but focuses on the Grace associated with each Sacrament. (Refer to the Spiritual Advisor's Guide) After Lunch, the **Action** rollo, the **Obstacles to the Life of Grace** rollo, and the **Leaders** rollo are given.

The day ends with the Rosary, the social gathering (fiesta), the reunion of the table groups, and the Examination of Conscience and Night Prayers. After the Rosary, everyone is asked to approach the Blessed Sacrament for a visit. The fiesta is clarified as a social gathering. It is a part of brightening the atmosphere with simple impromptu jokes, games, songs, and humorous stories for relaxation. This is followed by the team leaders' meeting to review the next day's activities and the visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

Day 3 – Sunday: The meditations and rollos of Day 3 complete the reality of the person wanting to be fully human and fully alive through the three encounters with self, Christ, and others. What happens and what is stated on Day 3 is directly related to the way the Cursillistas will spend the rest of their lives – their 4th Day.

The team prepares each new Cursillista for insertion into the world by being witnesses of Total Security: Group Reunion and Ultreya. As outlined in the leader's attitude for Day 3, the leaders respond to the Cursillistas by demonstrating through their living witness the method of perseverance applied during the 4th Day to strengthen their Christian life. The team validates the Cursillistas' concerns and offers encouragement to begin building the bridge to the Postcursillo: 4th Day community.

The **Mañanitas**, addressed in **Appendix 13**, begin the last day of the Cursillo. The following information is from a video of Eduardo Bonnín talking with the National Staff members in Mallorca, Spain. Eduardo provided a clarification for the inclusion of the Mañanitas [morning serenade] in Cursillo. The Mañanitas have been part of Cursillo in Mallorca for many years.

To quote Eduardo Bonnín, he said, "The Mañanitas is a tangible sign that the Palanca the Cursillistas have been hearing about **really is happening**: people are praying and sacrificing for them. The Cursillistas feel connected when they see that the 4th Day community cares about them, which fosters a sense of unity. The Mañanitas is a positive experience and the beginning of friendship between the Cursillistas and the 4th Day Cursillo community."

The Mañanitas are followed by morning prayer, morning offering (Pilgrim's Guide page 19), and the fifth meditation: Christ's Message to the Cursillistas. After breakfast, a group photo is taken. The Study of the Environment rollo follows. There are NO posters today.

The Rector explains the purpose of the **Service Sheet** before the Life in Grace rollo is given. See **Appendix 14 – Service Sheet**. It includes the story of the Elderly Man's Last Will, which is about commitment. Mass is next, followed by lunch. After lunch, the rector explains the cost of the Cursillo, and envelopes are passed out for a voluntary donation (Sometimes called the moment of

pain talk). The **Christianity in Action** rollo is next. Followed by the **Cursillista Beyond the Cursillo** and **Total Security** rollos.

After the Total Security rollo, everyone will be placed into groups to experience the Group Reunion. This includes the team and any visitors. If one of the new Cursillistas is the only one from a remote area, a visitor from that area is invited to be a part of this Group Reunion at the Cursillo weekend. This is so important for a first experience of an actual Group Reunion to allow for someone who will be available to group with after the Cursillo or someone who will be a friendly, familiar face at a distant Ultreya.

The Rector explains the Clausura, **Appendix 15 – The Clausura**. The purpose of the Closing (Clausura) is to get the new Cursillistas to live and experience what they have been told in the Rollos of “Christianity in Action”, “Cursillista Beyond the Cursillo,” and “Total Security”. They see the living reality. The visitors' presence and words at the Closing ceremony show that they can encounter the normal, living, and near Christ they have discovered in the Cursillo every day of their lives. The Service Sheet is returned to each Cursillista.

The team gives thanks before the Blessed Sacrament as they leave the Cursillo.

In Closing

The National Secretariat views the legacy and gift from our Founder, Eduardo Bonnín, to the US Cursillo Movement as highly important. It deserves our complete focus and thorough examination so that Cursillistas can comprehend, adopt, and share its message.

From My Spiritual Testament by Eduardo Bonnín (p.19), he stated, “I sincerely believe that one of the greatest assets that I possess is the knowledge of what the true Cursillos in Christianity consist of, as well as the Movement generated by them. And I know by proven experience that when each piece that makes up the Precursillo, Cursillo, and Postcursillo fulfills its purpose, it responds like clockwork precision to its aim, which is nothing more than to try to have the Good News of the Gospel reach as many people as possible, and preferably those furthest away [the faraway].”

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give you thanks, Lord, for the action of Your Holy Spirit within us. We feel happy because You have shared Your friendship with us. By Your words, our souls have been enlightened, and our hearts have been strengthened, making us willing to carry out the mission You have entrusted to each one of us. The adventure is appealing, although not easy, but we are comforted by the knowledge that You are walking along beside us.

De Colores!