

THE TREE OF CURSILLO - MAINTAINING ITS CLEAR AND SIMPLE PROFILE

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Ever Heard of the Screwdriver Effect?

As Wikipedia states, a typical screwdriver is a tool used to drive screws. Its original purpose was to insert or remove screws from objects, and that purpose still holds today. Everyone understands a screwdriver's primary purpose and proper use. However, despite this common knowledge, many people have used screwdrivers for purposes other than driving screws.

Although the screwdriver was made for a specific purpose, some people use it to pry open cans, poke holes in various materials, chisel, dig for planting seeds, scrape surfaces, and more. Continued misuse can distort the tip, making it ineffective for its original use. However, if used as intended, the screwdriver will reliably perform its designed task. Similarly, with Cursillo, we are encouraged to fully adopt its core principles, purpose, mentality, methodology, and Foundational Charism to ensure its true purpose is realized.

Since its inception, the Cursillo Movement has been reshaped, adapted, and modified. However, its original purpose remains unchanged. Over the years, like a tool used for different tasks, some have strayed from its primary goal and used the Movement for additional purposes beyond its original intent.

As Cursillo leaders today, we continue to study the Foundational Charism of Cursillos in Christianity. We are responsible for being faithful and trustworthy stewards of this gift and ensuring the Movement retains its divine mission. If we deviate, the Movement risks becoming like the screwdriver that no longer serves its intended purpose, and future generations, our replacements, won't know or be able to carry out the intended purpose of Cursillo. Our responsibility is to pass on what the Founder passed on to us – the true Foundational Charism of Cursillo.

The Foundational Charism of the Cursillo Movement

When we speak about the intended purpose of the Cursillo Movement, we are reminded of its Foundational Charism. A Charism is an extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit given to a believer for the good of the entire Church. We know that the Foundational Charism of the Cursillos in Christianity was given to the person of Eduardo Bonnín – not for Eduardo – but for the entire Church. It is a Charism that encourages people to encounter Christ in the normality of their lives without abandoning the place where God has placed them, by discovering a Christ who loves them and is alive, normal, personal, and close to us.

Eduardo's final illness prevented him from completing his "Spiritual Testament," leaving it open-ended. Each Cursillista is invited to complete it by living the Foundational Charism in daily life. We are not meant to alter, distort, or adapt the Charism personally, but to be faithful to this gift. You can purchase the book online, "My Spiritual Testament," at the National Cursillo Bookstore.

Eduardo included a chapter in My Spiritual Testament titled Warning to Seafarers. "The reason for this warning to seafarers – [is] so that they may be faithful to the goal the Cursillos are after

and for which they were devised, designed, prayed for, and structured. [The reason for the warning] is that it has been proven that from their inception in 1944, more than a few times – I wish to believe with good intention – they have been skimmed, deactivated, abducted or nipped in the bud of their nature and effectiveness, undoubtedly by people of goodwill and perhaps even believing that in doing so they were making a gift to God and to Cursillo. However, there are serious reasons to believe that many interpretations, changes, restructuring, updates, and reductions have been made with the desire to use the Cursillo. At times this has even been done with the aim of taking their cut, with a wish for being in the limelight of something they assume can help them to excel in the pious market, which is normally so lacking in originality and creativity.”

In Chapter VI of My Spiritual Testament, Eduardo writes: “If we compare the Cursillo Movement to a tree, we are happy to see that it has grown, because an evangelical seed sown in many hearts and cultivated with prayer has given its fruit; but it also hurts us to see that in some places, no doubt with the best of intentions, they have taken the tree of the Cursillos for a Christmas tree and have been hanging lights and decorations - their favorite brilliant ideas - and have gradually been spoiling its clear and simple profile.”

Dangers in Cursillo

It is crucial to address potential dangers within the Cursillo Movement, as they can hinder us from achieving its true purpose and method. This article outlines some of these dangers.

1st Danger is Inflation, which occurs when the number of Cursillo Weekends in a diocese exceeds the number of Cursillistas who can be absorbed into the Postcursillo.

At times, we tend to focus more on building up the Cursillo Movement and less on the person. The Cursillo Weekend is a remarkable, exciting, and life-changing experience, but it becomes a one-time event without any follow-up [accompaniment]. This lack of follow-up can leave the Cursillistas without support or encouragement in the Postcursillo. It will be challenging for them to find their way without Group Reunion or Ultreya. As a result, they may feel uncomfortable and unsure. Consequently, it will be difficult for them to fully experience the Cursillo, which may lead to a loss of interest and/or a sense of being deceived.

In Cursillo, we often focus more on what leads up to the Cursillo Weekend than on developing a lasting relationship with Christ. We tend to favor a ‘spectacular’ Christianity rather than prioritizing the essential aspects of being a Christian.

We often struggle to fully comprehend the Movement and may not apply it effectively to attract others to Christ and Cursillo. While the encounter with Christ is emphasized, the importance of developing a lasting friendship with Him and following Him does not receive enough attention. Because of this danger, three points need to be emphasized:

1. The diocesan leadership should schedule Cursillo Weekends only when an active Christianity in Action (Postcursillo) is available, thereby effectively integrating Cursillistas.
2. After completing a Cursillo Weekend, the diocesan leadership and sponsors must ensure that all Cursillistas are integrated into Group Reunion and Ultreya.

3. The Cursillo Weekend team must understand that their duty to follow up and support the Cursillistas extends beyond the Closing.

2nd Danger is Specialization. This can occur when Cursillo Weekends are held for specific people or groups.

It's important to resist the temptation of 'specialization' when organizing Cursillo Weekends. Holding a Cursillo exclusively for youth, doctors, nurses, clergy, military personnel, law enforcement, or the media does not reflect the charism of Cursillo, which values diversity. Instead, these groups should join a single Cursillo with a diverse mix of participants.

Baptism plays a crucial role in fostering progressive growth in being a Christian. Everyone can develop their faith and spirituality. The most vital aspect is communicating the Good News of God's love to everyone we encounter. No matter who they are or where they come from, every person is valuable and deserving of experiencing God's love.

To avoid the risk of holding specialized Cursillos, it is important to highlight specific key points.

- Avoid offering Cursillo Weekends for specific groups of people. Focus on diversity.
- Remind all Cursillo leaders that the Movement does not target specific environments for evangelization. Cursillistas can evangelize from where they are.

3rd Danger is Organization. Cursillos in Christianity is a Movement, not an organization. The Secretariat and School of Leaders are intentionally kept minimal in structure to prevent them from becoming one.

Sometimes, people criticize the Cursillo Movement for being outdated and in need of modernization. However, many may not realize that Cursillo is grounded in the Gospel and its foundational charism.

The Cursillo Movement and its Charism do not impose; they attract.

- The Secretariat must respect the intelligence, freedom, and free will of the Cursillistas.
- Cursillistas can decide whether to participate in Group Reunion, Ultreya, and the School of Leaders. They participate because of personal attraction.

4th Danger is Cursillo-ism, which occurs when Cursillo is overvalued.

Some Cursillistas view Cursillo as the ultimate solution for their Christian life. However, this strong attachment can lead to overestimating the method, sometimes even to the point of ignoring everything else. While Cursillos' purpose and approach may be unique, it is not the only movement in the Church that shares the Gospel. Focusing solely on the Cursillo Weekend and neglecting the Precursillo and Postcursillo can result in negative consequences. It is important to value and establish friendships with other ecclesial movements, ministries, and associations.

- Cursillo-ism emphasizes Cursillos' technique, method, and style more than Cursillos' evangelical content.
- Cursillo-ism believes that the only means for discovering and living what is fundamental to being Christian is Cursillo, as if we had an exclusive 'patent for salvation' or as if

Cursillo were the ‘depository of the Truth’.

- Cursillo-ism undervalues other diverse realities of the Church, such as parish ministries, associations, organizations, etc., and shows a lack of collaboration, dialogue, and friendship with these groups.
- Cursillo-ism wants to live Christianity ‘my way’ and forget about the ecclesial community.
- Cursillo-ism is attempting to remove Cursillo from its indispensable union with the hierarchy.
- Cursillo-ism focuses on the Cursillo Weekend and forgets the perennial Fourth Day of the Postcursillo.

5th Danger is Parochialism. Cursillo is not and never was intended to be parish-based.

Cursillos are not meant to make leaders for parish work. Sometimes, Cursillistas come off the Cursillo Weekend looking for outlets for their service and may decide to work in a parish ministry. That is perfectly acceptable. However, this ecclesial service should not remove Cursillistas from their basic Christian action in daily life: witnessing to Christ where God has placed them. The world is where Cursillo carries out its apostolic action.

Cursillistas will serve Christ and His Church in the place where He has called them – the idea of ‘blooming where you are planted’. Cursillistas seek to Christianize the world by nurturing all their relationships to imbue them with a Christian purpose.

6th Danger is Clericalism. This occurs when the clergy oversteps its role and assumes the laity’s role.

The Cursillo Movement is a lay initiative. However, the clergy and laity must work together while maintaining their distinct roles. Cursillo will bear much fruit for the Lord and maintain a lasting relationship with the Church, its hierarchy, and its mission. However, problems may arise when the clergy oversteps its bounds and interferes with the laity's role.

It can be challenging when the laity refuses to take responsibility for their role and expects the clergy to make all the decisions. This behavior indicates a lack of respect for each other's roles. The dilemma now lies in balancing roles versus relationships. The most effective solution to prevent clericalism is to maintain distinct but complementary roles. In these relationships, friendship, love, and humility are crucial in respecting each other’s roles.

7th Danger is Secularism. This happens when the laity do not collaborate or cooperate with the clergy. Secularism occurs when people try to remove the clergy from their role. It can also happen when people deliberately choose not to establish dialogue or friendship with the clergy. Another sign of secularism is when the laity takes on the role of the spiritual advisor. Lastly, some may believe that Cursillo is solely the work of the laity, which can also be a manifestation of secularism.

In other words, the clergy's role may be undervalued, or Cursillo may be overemphasized as a Lay Movement, ignoring its vital relationship with the Church's hierarchy.

8th Danger is Angelism—the temptation of pride.

When we focus solely on our spiritual life and needs without believing in God's love and mercy, we fall into the trap of Angelism. This means not believing in the power of Christ's promises to humanity, which can lead to prideful, self-centered behavior instead of a Christ-centered life.

When someone believes and has faith, God's love and power come into action. To influence others and foster a Christian environment, we must first embrace the truth of the Gospel and build our strength and faith.

9th Danger is Temporalism, which occurs when we insist on doing things our way.

From this perspective, we carry out our evangelizing actions based only on our beliefs and standards. Temporalism is a state in which we think we can save the world, irrespective of our life circumstances or relationship with Christ. In this state, we believe our deeds alone are enough and continue to act without being guided by Christian virtues.

Living in a state of Grace and loving God and our neighbor is the foundation of being a Christian. No amount of prayer or action can make us Christian if we lack love for God and our fellow beings. Loving God and our neighbor is the core of Christian living.

The 10th danger is stagnation, which occurs when there is no stimulation.

It can be problematic when we start feeling like *we know it all*. In some places, the same actions are repeated without progress; in other words, *if it isn't broken, don't fix it*. This mindset can lead to stagnation, inflexibility, and isolation from the Cursillo Movement structure.