

2nd Rollo -THE ESSENCE OF CURSILLO- THE CHARISM

By Carol Palesh

Christ and the Love of God is our ESSENCE and we find this in the CHARISM of Cursillo.

When I first lived my Cursillo I did not realize I was on a journey of discovery. To discover who I am, to discover how much Christ loves me personally, and to discover that I can help others to discover Christ's love for them.

In this journey, at first I did not know the depth of Cursillo, I only knew what I experienced on my weekend. I left that weekend with a hunger for more, to love Christ more, to know more about Him, and His Church, and to discover more about Cursillo.

At that time (1969) everyone attended Leaders School after their weekend. We heard talks and received Cursillo literature and books and I began to learn more as I started my lessons on Cursillo, it was very interesting and exciting. Johnny and I became regular in attending Ultreya and as we shared and listened we discovered more about Cursillo and were encouraged in our faith and special friendships developed.

The first weekend I worked I gave the Christian Community Rollo continuing to discover more. Over the years I was a Talk advisor for the Sunday Rollo's, worked as Precursillo Chairman reading all I could on PreCursillo, was Rector of a weekend and read the Leaders Manual cover to cover, I became the Lay Director here,

and then School of Leaders Chairman. In 1995 I met Eduardo Bonnin our founder personally in Colorado during a National Encounter where he gave a presentation entitled “Keep Cursillo Simple”. What a blessing to meet our founder and ponder his words - what did they mean? Another discovery to find.

Next I was asked to be Region Three Coordinator and went on to be part of the National Secretariat. At that time I realized that many people were in need of information and I worked the book table at the National Encounters helping others to know what books were important so they could discover for themselves the deep understanding of Cursillo.

In all of this I kept growing in my own understanding of Cursillo but there was no emphasis on the Essence or Charism until 2003.

This interest in the study of our Charism came about because Pope John Paul II held a World Congress of Ecclesial Movements in Rome in 1998. At that time he asked all the movements to discover their Original Charism and live it to the fullest.

Where do we go to find our Charism and the Essence?

In the words of Pope - St. John Paul II, “the **FOUNDER** is the bearer of the original charism”. He said it is the FOUNDER FROM WHICH THE CHARISM IS BORN. AND IT IS THROUGH THE FOUNDER THAT THE CHARISM LIVES.”

Our founder is Eduardo Bonin. In 1994 Eduardo called together leaders in our movement and presented a workshop in Cala Figuera,

Majorca Spain, the setting of the first Cursillo. Ten topics were discussed highlighting a number of normal ideas about the person. These ten topics resonate in the founding essence of the Cursillo movement. They are **Person, Freedom, Criterion, Conviction, Friendship, Sincerity, Love, Normality, Life, and Joy.**

This was a time to immerse in the founding charism and to find what the Holy Spirit has wanted to convey to humanity through Cursillo. (Book on Charism and 1st Conversations)

If we find these ten elements in our movement the Charism lives and we will draw closer to God on a daily basis.

In 2003 our National Encounter presented these topics. It was an exciting encounter and from that time until now - myself as a person, our diocese, the National Cursillo and the World Cursillo have begun a journey to discover our Foundational Essence and Charism.

I had the desire to know more and my discovery of Cursillo continued, but in a different way. I wanted to know more about Eduardo. I wanted to discover his thoughts his essence and how he developed Cursillo.

Every book I read I looked to see if Eduardo wrote this, is this from Eduardo? I started with the Ten Topics of Cala Figuera, the How and Why, The Charism book and several of his presentations. More and more of his books are being translated from Spanish to English.

One reason it took so long to discover the original Charism was because his writings were written in Spanish and had to be translated. Our own Gail Terrana is dedicated to getting these translations done. Thanks Gail!

First I needed to know what a Charism is.

A Charism is a free gift from the Holy Spirit, given to an **individual person** and given for the good of the whole Church. The Holy Spirit gives a charism as a response to the varied needs of the Church. It is at the service of others.

Why is the Charism important for a Movement to know?

The original charism gives **life to a movement**. It points us to the essence of a movement.

The charism is the source of every movement's spiritual **strength and character**.

A Charism is a path of strengthening our faith and of growing in our love of Jesus Christ who is our Christian Essence.

Then I needed learn about the founder, his life, and what affected him to be receptive to the Holy Spirit and how it happened in his life. I will share some of what I discovered.

Cursillo was born 70 years ago.

At that time our founder Eduardo had a strong Catholic upbringing and loved Christ. His time in the military had a strong impact on him. He studied those around him, the soldiers, his friends, the people in his person to person life. He saw that people were unhappy perhaps even angry. He wanted them to know that "God loves them" in a personal way. He became interested in having them experience the tenderness of God and to be happy in God's love

What brings happiness, what fills and gives sense to the life of every person. Happiness is to feel beloved and to feel oneself capable of loving. LOVE

Many times in life we may live in fear. We all fear being bothered, at a personal level and also at a community level.

Anger is a reaction to fear: the daily anger we feel when, we are feeling ignored, when we are being bothered, when we do not get what we want and so on.

We can either run away from our fears, or run to our aspirations, being aware of our options, and our ability to choose.

We can move to living fully or we can run away not knowing where we are going, because we are looking behind us and in our flight we run over whatever we find in our way, and the first ones to suffer are those close to us. We are not happy not satisfied.

When people run away from their fears they miss the right way.

When they try to escape from loneliness they look for pleasure, when they run from poverty they look for money, when they run from others they look for power, They believe that happiness is there in pleasure, money or power.

In those ways Happiness is not found.

“The truth will make you free”. Free of our fears.

Happiness is to be found in the truth of the Good News of Christ, which is knowing that we are loved and capable of loving. Saint Paul says: There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God.

God loves me, looks for me, waits for me, goes with me, understands me, accepts me, tolerates me, cries with me, feels my sorrows with me, enjoys my joy, he is happy in my happiness, he is my friend, and he counts on me and I count on him.

God loves us through Christ. Loving God, loving our neighbor and the world is what enables us to be Christians and is our Essence. Repeat!

In 1940, after leaving the military, Eduardo heard the words of Pope Pius XII that spoke about reaching out to people who are in the parish boundaries but who are not in the Church Pews. Something touched Eduardo's heart.

The Church was not reaching those "far away" a term he used to reference those uninformed, misinformed, or not informed. Those who live not knowing God's Love or maybe they did not listen. Maybe the language or style was not appropriate for them. So they have no faith or do not know if they have faith, or do not want to have faith. They are baptized but do not attend a parish, or they may attend weddings, baptisms, Christmas, Easter, or other functions. But they do not participate in parish activities or live the sacraments. They vegetate, spiritually, in the dough of the world.

The Charism and Essence of Cursillo is to reach these people to let them know personally that God loves them and awaken in them a hunger for God. To help them live Christ, through friendship and share this love with others.

Eduardo knew that those people yearning for happiness will listen more willingly to witnesses rather than teachers.

He knew the way had to be simple. He developed a method not about teaching, but about living and sharing. Bringing the Good News of God's love in a simple way to ordinary every day life, especially to those far away, using the method of friendship.

By bringing an ordinary person into a closed atmosphere and having others share through living witness their own discovery of God's love - the truth of the Gospel - and by sharing how they are living it in their life - and by developing friendships with these people, then the unsatisfied, unhappy ones, would come to understand and desire to live in God's grace and share it with others. It was not to change people but to help them to understand and experience the love of God, and to discover for themselves that God loves them.

Eduardo discovered through Psychology, the study of man, that man wants to be loved, and thru Theology the study of God, that God loves Man.

God seeks man, through Christ, in his Church. And so man seeks God with a heart that is restless until it rests in Him. So they find each other, through Grace - in the Mystery of Salvation.

He brought Psychology and Theology together in a powerful and spiritual way, in what people who believe in God can do. How God's promises can come alive in our everyday life and bring the Essence of Christ and "What is Fundamental for being a Christian" to life.

Eduardo prayed, worked and studied the goal to be achieved. and the method to accomplish it. The **Goal** was to make Christianity live in a person. For the person to know God loves them through Christ.

The **Method** he found was for the Cursillo to be an instrument of the **truth** and **life** of the Christian. A place where the person discovers that his life has meaning and that Christ and His Grace is the only thing that can give him the feeling of being alive and leading a meaningful life.

This led Eduardo to write the “Study of the Environment” Rollo. This Rollo became the cornerstone of the Cursillo Movement, For it is from this one “rollo” that all the others come from.

There are two essential elements in this Rollo.

First - it is not the structures in society we want to focus on, but the person in our every day life. When I first heard about focusing on the person I thought great! I can do this. Who are the people in my life I meet every day?

Second - it involves three levels:

1st ourselves - how we think and what we say.

2nd - the condition of others, and our relationships with them.

3rd - the surroundings we find ourselves in where this communication takes place.

Simply put - We take a warm approach person to person. Through friendship we show the love of Christ and offer a way to live this. Loving God and loving our neighbor and the world is what enables us to be Christians.

EDUARDO ALSO DEVELOPED THREE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS FOR THE CURSILLO.

1. THE FIRST IS THE PRECURSILLO - TO COME AND SEE. THE INVITATION TO KNOW MORE.

2. THE SECOND ELEMENT IS THE CURSILLO WEEKEND EXPERIENCE THAT CAUSE'S THE SOUL TO MEET WITH GOD.

TRUTH AND LIFE ARE THE KEY

THE TRUTH OF CHRIST IS PRESENTED IN HIS TEACHINGS IN THE GOSPEL READINGS AND HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK AND THROUGH THE MEDITATIONS, ROLLO'S ON GRACE AND SACRAMENTS.

The Cursillo Movement is a place for the person to find A **LIVING AND PERSONAL CHRIST.**

CURSILLO LEADERS ARE PUT AT THE SERVICE OF ALL. THEIR SUCCESSES AND FAILURES ARE LIVING WITNESS'S OF CHRISTIAN VALUES. THEY ARE NOT MERE IDEAS, BUT LIVING IDEAS WITH FLESH AND BLOOD, BONE AND NERVE. THEIR INTERIOR SPIRITUALITY SHINES AND THEIR SIMPLICITY ATTRACTS OTHERS.

THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN ANIMATES AND INFORMS ALL THE ACTS AND ALL THE MOMENTS OF A CURSILLO, WITH SIMPLICITY, SINCERITY, AND BOLDNESS.

THE "**ROLLO'S**" OR TALKS ON THE WEEKEND ARE NOT ANY KIND OF TALK, BUT THEY HAVE A STYLE OF THEIR OWN. THEY ARE FULL OF THE SPEAKER'S PERSONALITY AND EXPERIENCES AND ARE GEARED TO BRING LISTENERS TO A STATE OF DESIRING TO DO LIKEWISE. THEY ARE ABOUT **TRUTH AND LIFE**, GIVEN IN A SIMPLE WAY AND COME FROM THE DEPTHS OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. THEY BRING THE TRUTHS TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL BECAUSE THEY ARE TRUTHS OF A LIFE LIVED.

The person and **THE LIFE** of a person is the most important aspect of our movement. By this personal encounter with Christ and his grace, the person discovers that life has meaning. We are able to love, to live life to

the fullest, to seek friendship, to make interesting discoveries, to know the purpose of our life and we are happy.

WE NOT ONLY INFORM OTHERS OF THE **TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY**, BUT WE BRING A PERSONAL INVITATION TO SHARE IN THIS LIFE. IT IS A STARTING POINT FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CURSILLISTA. THE ESSENCE OF CURSILLO IS TO **MAKE CHRISTIANITY LIVE**.

3.THE THIRD ELEMENT IS THE POST CURSILLO - GROUP REUNION AND ULTREYA- WHICH HELP THOSE WHO HAVE MET GOD TO **FOLLOW HIM A WHOLE LIFE LONG**.

IN EDUARDO'S WORDS."THE CURSILLO IS MADE IN ORDER TO LIVE THE FOURTH DAY... THE PURPOSE OF THE POSTCURSILLO IS TO SEE CHRIST IN EVERY MOMENT. AND TO ILLUMINATE OTHERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE FAR AWAY, IN ANY OF THE PLACES IN WHICH WE LIVE". I

THE POST CURSILLO is the center of the movement, in the Group Reunion and Ultreya we continue to live the key points of our everyday Christian life In our Group Reunion we share with each other our plans or activities we may have in our day to day life.

Witness: (Let me share - Letters to my Great granddaughter Jasmine. Through a sharing I had in Group Reunion at Ultreya I was graced with the idea to share my life with my great granddaughter and the ways my Catholic Christian upbringing helped me with my life experiences. I am writing her one letter a week.)

Our piety, study and action, keeps us authentic as we say to others
"Come and see",

WHICH LEADS US TO THE PRECURSILLO AND THEN TO THE CURSILLO.

WE KNOW GOD WILL HELP US AS HE BRINGS TO US ENTHUSIASM AND AN EXPLOSION OF OPTIMISM, JOY AND TRUST. THE CERTAINTY OF DIVINE LOVE BY CHRIST IS OUR SECURITY AND GUARDS US AGAINST THE TEMPTATION OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

AS WE STUDY AND REFLECT ON ALL OF THIS WE discover originality and creativity in our lives. We live with freedom and conviction and our will is strengthened in our decision making and we constantly strive to foster new friendships in our daily living. In the simplest way, the rhythm of our life changes, and we realize that Christ is working in our life and perhaps in the lives of others in our life, in our family, in our work, person to person.

We have all lived the experience of a momentous meeting with Christ. From that moment the living Christ of the Gospel is our constant motivation and guide.

Going back to my discovery - Our Pope John Paul II also stated that “The passage from the original charism to the movement happens through the mysterious attraction that the founder holds for all those who become involved in his spiritual experience.”

Eduardo did this. He spent his whole life passing on his knowledge and understanding of the charism and essence of Cursillo. He traveled all over the world to meet Cursillistas and give presentations. He wrote many books some of which I will talk about later during the Book Review. He called together leaders and in 1994 and presented the ten topics from the **1st Conversations at Cala Figuera.**

Eduardo also developed a workshop for a better understanding of the charism, essence, purpose and mentality, of Cursillo, called **Cursillo de Cursillo** which some of us experienced in 2015. My study and discovery has continued and when I was on the team for 2 CDC's in the Caribbean I was especially illuminated by the Essence and Purpose Rollo.

Before Eduardo died in 2008 he was putting together comprehensive “instructive method” referred to as his **“Spiritual Testament”**. He did not complete it but the leaders in Mallorca following his directives are completing it. It will include:

A Rectors guide for a Three-Day Weekend- Eduardo called it “Step by Step”. Lay Rollo outlines and Precursillo and Postcursillo Details. We will more about it in the coming months.

We all need Eduardo’s words so we can study and reflect on them and make our own discoveries.

I have shared my journey of discovery and I am praying that we all grow together in this gift of the Holy Spirit as our lives become a living witness of our Charism - our Essence - Christ.

From the study of the Charism book it states, “We are to continue to generate friendship among people that we find in the person to person places in which the Lord has placed us, so that everyone, especially those far away, might know that God loves them.”

We discover that store of joy which the world is in urgent need of, and we rejoice because the Lord has given us this joy and and the world is waiting for it.

De Colores