



ORGANISMO
MUNDIAL DE CURSILLOS
DE CRISTIANDAD

MCC

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Dear Friends,

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May the peace and love of Our Lord always be with you!

We would like begin this bulletin with a congratulatory note to all of the 23 new Cardinals that our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI named, including Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko of the Pontifical Council of the Laity.

As we continue to study within our School of Leaders, we are opening ourselves to new discoveries. This study among friends in our School allows for an exchange of ideas - even if we do not agree, we are free to share our thoughts. We form our thoughts from our own experiences. And for some of us, these experiences are limited. Limited by the amount we are able to apply these ideas to our own lives. And when we apply these new discoveries to our own life, there is a “dying to self” that takes place. By “dying to self” we are letting go of our own preconceived ideas. In order to be open, we must “let go”.

This is when our unity can increase – when we open ourselves to others, and respect each other’s freedom.

One of the beautiful gifts of Cursillo is the culture and heritage it springs from. Culture is an important element through which God speaks to us. John Paul II in his book, “Memoria e Identidad” wrote, “Culture is a specific way of existing and of being for man... Culture is that by means which the human being, in his being human, becomes more human, he “is” more... A nation, is, in effect, a great community of human beings united in different ways, but above all by culture...” (p. 85)

In as much as study is the search for the truth, we find a connection from the study we are engaged in now as a movement to the way Pope John Paul II explains culture in the book cited above. He makes reference to Genesis “where it says God created man in his image and told them, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it,” (Gn 1, 28). These words are the first and most complete definition of human culture. Subdue the earth means to discover and confirm the truth of being human, of that humanity that man and woman equally share. God has trusted this man, in his humanity, all the visible world as a gift and a task at the same time; he has given him a concrete mission: to arrive at the truth of himself and the world.” (Translated from “Memoria e Identidad”, p. 81.)

Cursillo has its heritage and culture. One song can have a huge impact in understanding

when it is a song that transmits culture, heritage and thus ultimately the message in a deeper way than one person's ideas. Words and customs that become a part of the Cursillo culture represent these ideas that go beyond one person and resonate in enough people that they can essentially be considered ambassadors of the message.

In listening to someone who just lived the experience of the three days, we learned how deeply touched he was by the song 'De Colores'. Even though the words were new, he identified the song with the work songs of villagers. This had great impact on him because he made a connection with those who have rich understanding of themselves and community because they are from a village. And now, he feels connected with the community of Cursillo with our 'work song' as he described it. His own background knowledge of anthropology was tapped into upon knowing the origin of the song and this assisted in his understanding of the message of Christian Community at work.

Openness to appreciate the culture of Cursillo that has developed worldwide is to appreciate how culture unites us. Our present study is a call to see what God has done and express it clearly.

There is a unity in spirit from our active participation of study, in the adventure of knowing our movement from its 'genesis' to reveal the gifts of our charism. A unity that comes from friendship – a friendship planted in grace will facilitate this unity of mind and heart; respecting one another's gifts, talents, and differences, and learning from them as we continue our journey to the Father and serve one another.

One living example of this is the Pilgrimage that the OMCC organized from the 6 to the 21 of October to raise funds. They visited Mallorca, Barcelona, Lourdes, Covadonga, San Sebastian, Bilbao, Santiago de Compostela, Avila and Madrid amongst other important places in Spain. There were 48 people from Mallorca, the United States, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico, Argentina, El Salvador and Guatemala. They spoke different languages, they had different cultures and mentalities, but all shared one common ideal, to seek the Roots of Cursillos and to deepen their spirituality.

They all had a chance to meet and speak directly with Eduardo Bonnin, to visit the birthplace of that first Cursillo that took place from the 20 to the 23 of August, 1944 at Mar i Pins of Cala Figuera (Santanyi-Mallorca) and meet and talk to Salvador Escribano, one of the Cursillistas from this first Cursillo. They also had a chance to see and celebrate a Mass at the Monastery of San Honorato, the place of the first Official Cursillo #1 that took place on January 9, 1949.

They had an opportunity to meet and live an Ultreya with the Cursillista Community of Mallorca, as well as visit and fall in love with Our Lady Of Lluc, Montserrat, Lourdes, Covadonga, Santiago de Compostela and Saint Teresa of Avila amongst other important saints, Cathedrals and important places of our faith.

In essence, all 48 had the rare opportunity to share a 16 day long Ultreya where they constantly shared their life, prayed, played, laughed and even cried together. And in so doing, they united in Mentality and in the love and friendship of God, in Jesus Christ. For this, we like to thank all the people that participated directly or indirectly.

As you can see, when we open our mind and heart to dialog and we stay faithful to the Roots of our Movement, the Gospel, traditions and cultures, we can all become one in mind and spirit.

As our last point in this Bulletin, we would like to remind you of the ongoing “One Dollar” fundraiser to fund the Fundamental Ideas Project. We should also keep the ongoing Statutes project in our mind and in our prayers.

Like always, we ask for your prayers so that we can discern the Will of God and have the courage to carry it forward.

De Colores,



Juan Ruiz
Presidente - OMCC

A note from our Spiritual Advisor...

CURSILLO “SIGHT” V. “CULTURE”

“I once was blind, but now I see”. These words, familiar to us in the song “Amazing Grace” are found in the Gospel of John (9:25), pronounced by the man, blind from birth, after his encounter with Jesus.

All of us need to be healed of the “blindness” which limits our horizons. Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical “God is Love”, stated that “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with a person (Jesus Christ) which gives life a new horizon..” The joy of this encounter with the God who is Love leads us to be willing to die to or let go of our old ways of “seeing”. We move out of the “comfort zones” of our previous points of view, as we avoid being entrenched in defending our worldview to the end. This obstinacy of sight has led to many “turf battles” within our Movement, which have crippled an ability to proclaim to the world the “best news” that God does love us!

The letter to the Romans (12:2) asks all Christians to “be transformed by the renewal of your mind..”. It says thus after the previous verse which speaks of the need to die to self—“offer yourselves as a living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1). My Cursillo “worldview” was undone by the experience of participating in the Second Conversations of Cala Figuera in April, 2002. After much resistance on my part, I came to see that my own opinions had blinded me to many aspects of our Movement. It was the most difficult “dying to self” of my life.

Our ways of seeing reality are culturally conditioned. The Latin American Bishops (CELAM, its initials in Spanish), in section 3.7 of the document which was promulgated after their Encounter in Aparecida, Brazil in May 2007, observed that “cultural elements are the understanding of reality through which every human being can perceive the world in which he or she lives”. Similar words were uttered by Pope John Paul II at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. in October, 1999; “The cultural atmosphere in which a human being lives has a great influence upon his or her way of thinking, and therefore, of acting. “

The Church expresses the Culture of the Gospel to the neophytes (the word means “new born” or “newly grafted into Christ”) in the liturgy of Lent and Easter on the fourth Sunday of Lent in which the Gospel passage, which began my reflections, is proclaimed (John 9). The following prayers accompany the second scrutiny: “Free these elect from the false values that surround and blind them...Guide them along the paths of right faith...with eyes unsealed...”, (RCIA #168). Sections 245 and 246 of the RCIA speak of the neophytes in this fashion: Their new participation in the sacraments enlightens their understanding of the Scriptures...our of this experience, they derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church, and of the world”. The Church, through its sacramental life contributes to the formation of the Gospel “culture”, which, in turn, “forms” the Church. Through this experience of faith, we come to “see” in a new way.

The “New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality” lists the following “constitutive elements of culture”:

- 1) common worldview or vision of life (N.B. This is the 1st element)
- 2) common meanings, values, and goals
- 3) common categories and patterns of thought
- 4) common tradition
- 5) common patterns of behavior
- 6) common organization of relationships

It goes on to say that these are acquired, embodied and transmitted through symbols, such as “signs, language, social customs, habits, modes of behavior, and religious practices. This being said, I believe that there exists a Cursillo “culture” which needs to be preserved if it is to be passed on to future generations without being ADULTERATED or “colonized” by other “cultures” which would rob Cursillo of its identity.

We share a common way of seeing in the Cursillo Culture. We see “what we have always see, but with new eyes”, through the lens of “De Colores”, that is through the joy of shared living the life of grace in friendship. We must be zealous in protecting our Cursillo patrimony.

Recently, I read of an indigenous tribe in Alaska that now consists of only 45 members. One of them has taken it upon her self to teach the remaining members their ancestral language. Without the vehicle of their language, which expresses and facilitates their continuing identity, their culture will disappear and our world will become more culturally impoverished. The “language” we offer to the cultures of the world, as Christians is the Gospel, which we can sum up in the Lord’s Prayer and in the Beatitudes. However within the “languages” of the Gospel, we speak a specifically Cursillo “dialect” which expresses our identity and perpetuates it. Our “dialect” is a necessary component of Cursillo culture. It is

how we “communicate” with each other and with the world around us. Our “dialect” has its own jargon, symbols, customs and values. If our world were to be deprived of our Cursillo “culture”, it would also be diminished.

Our task is not to recreate Cursillo in our image and likeness, thereby plundering or squandering its cultural riches, but rather as Juan Ruiz said in his reflection “to see what God has done and express it clearly...” As friends may we continue to be immersed in our Cursillo culture that enables us to live “De Colores”.

De Colores,

Rev. David A. Smith

Fr. David Smith
Spiritual Advisor - OMCC