

August 2003

To: National Mailing Recipients

Fm: National Cursillo Center

Re: August National Mailing

It has been awhile since we have issued a National Mailing and I (Tom Sarg) would like to personally apologize for this discrepancy. We have been very busy with preparing for the National Encounter, which by all reports was received most favorably by those attending.

In the past we have sent out notices, via e-mail, that a new National Mailing issue has been placed onto our website. Due to problems with “Spam”, many Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are discontinuing the practice of sending out large volumes of email. For this reason, we encourage all to periodically review the National Cursillo Movement’s website.

A great deal of information will be included in this National Mailing. We encourage our diocesan and regional leaders to encourage as many cursillistas as possible to log onto our website and read this National Mailing.

13th National Encounter in Cincinnati, OH

As mentioned above, it appears that the 13th National Encounter was a tremendous success. It was quite different from previous Encounters wherein we did not have any workshops. All the presentations were major presentations and everyone had the opportunity to hear the same message and share that message with others at their tables.

We had approximately 630 participants at this year’s Encounter. The facilities at Xavier University provided us the opportunity to set up 65 round tables with 10 chairs per table (a decuria). In addition, we were able to have simultaneous translators throughout the entire Encounter and the translators provided excellent work. Everything was translated from either English to Spanish or Spanish to English.

We had cursillistas from Canada and from Spain. We had a nun travel from Hawaii to be present. We had representatives from the English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Portuguese and Filipino elements of the Cursillo Movement.

During the Mass we had the readings read in Korean, Vietnamese and Tagalog. We were blessed with having two bishops at our Mass on Friday and our National Episcopal Advisor celebrating the Sunday liturgy for us on Saturday. We had nearly 60 priests, deacons and vowed religious. On Saturday we took up a collection to assist Fr. Ivan Rohloff in his work to translate our Cursillo literature into Russian so that he can help conduct the first-ever Cursillo Weekend in Russia. We collected nearly \$2,500.00 to be sent to Fr. Rohloff.

The Ultreya was one of the best that we have had in a long time. The sharing was great, the witnesses were superb and the commentaries were exceptional.

We have already received some notes from cursillistas who attended. Here are a couple of those notes.

One person wrote:

NATIONAL ENCOUNTER 2003: "AN AUTHENTIC CONVICTION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FUTURE OF THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT."

The above sentence is simply my words in summing up my experience this past Encounter, my first. It was truly inspirational and motivating. The fellowship amongst all of the lay people and clergy throughout our country (and some beyond!!) was a blessing to the eyes and heart. Specifically, to see well over 60 religious (priests, deacons, sisters, etc...) partake and "feel" the Joy of Cursillo brought prudence to the fundamental idea of BEING and LIVING Christian Community.

I feel honored to have been at such a blessed encounter and to have met many leaders of this movement. Specifically, to be able to sit and speak with Jesus Valls at the Encounter and Bishop Tamayo (riding back to the airport) are experiences that will inspire and encourage me as I continue my 4th Day. Of course, the many others I met and their commitment to prayer and service have also strengthened my Christian journey. Thanks be to God I have been able to share this enthusiasm with my wife and strengthen our 4th Day Journey together. Thank you for discerning and providing the format for the Encounter. Metanoia was in FULL MOTION this past Encounter!!!

Another person wrote:

Congratulation for an excellent job done by you and the National Office Staff and of course, the local community.

After 12 Encounters, where ethnic groups were separated by language, the Holy Spirit gave us this blessing to really experience unity in our diversity. We really saw the many faces in the House of the Lord. This is the Church I love and I have always dreamed of. We have been with our gates closed. This is the time to build bridges and to reach out to each other. God has given gifts to all of us and by sharing with each other we enrich each other. Let us ask God to help us continue building His Kingdom this way.

Next year's National Encounter will be held in Seattle, Washington from July 29 – August 1, 2004. During the 14th National Encounter we will again offer Major presentations and workshops. The focus on Friday will be *The Structure of Ideas* and the focus on Saturday will be the new 3-Day Manual (read the next part of this National Mailing).

National Cursillo Movement's Staff visits Mallorca, Spain

During the month of March 2003 members of the National Staff, for the Cursillo Movement, visited Mallorca, Spain and spent a great deal of time conversing with the founder of the Cursillo Movement – Eduardo Bonín. Those members were Jorge Barcelo

–National Spanish-speaking Coordinator; Joachim Thong Tinh Le – National Vietnamese-speaking Coordinator; Victor Lugo –National English-speaking Coordinator and Tom Sarg – National Executive Director.

This meeting came about because of several factors with the most influential factors being the revision of our 3-Day Manual and several meetings with Eduardo Bonnín, Jorge Barcelo and myself (Tom Sarg) in April 2002.

During that April 2002 meeting with Eduardo Bonnín, I heard him say many things that seemed to be in conflict with what I had come to understand about the Cursillo Movement. At the same time, I also reached a conclusion that I had been struggling with for a number of years. I had always understood that Eduardo was one of a group of individuals who developed the Cursillo Movement. Furthermore, I had often wondered if Eduardo may have been the dissident member of this group and since he is the only one still alive then we are all left to Eduardo’s interpretation of the Cursillo Movement. I can assure each of you that I no longer have those thoughts and I am thoroughly convinced that Eduardo is the one and only true founder of the Cursillo Movement.

What convinced me were his mannerisms and the way he explained all the aspects about the Cursillo Movement. It was obvious that this is a man who has allowed himself to be fully used by the Holy Spirit. There is no guile in him about anything or anyone. Truly, Eduardo could never have been a renegade member of any group.

During the March 2003 meeting with the National Staff we asked him about the other “founders” of the Cursillo Movement. Throughout the nearly 60 years of the Cursillo Movement (2004 will mark the 60th Anniversary of the Cursillo Movement) Eduardo has often talked of “we” when referring to aspects of the Cursillo Movement. Finally, after all these years, Eduardo is beginning to reveal that the “we” that he has referred to all these years are actually ideas that he has gleaned from other people, information that he has obtained from his extensive library and most importantly the presence of the Holy Spirit. Eduardo told us that he was always more concerned that people understood the concepts of the Cursillo Movement rather than who brought forth the concepts. To further prove that Eduardo was the one and only founder of the Cursillo Movement, one needs only to look at history and ask a couple of simple questions. Of the first eight Cursillo Weekends, held in Mallorca, Spain, Eduardo Bonnín was the Rector for every one of those Weekends. If there had been other founders, why were none of them the Rector for any of these first eight Cursillo Weekends? Furthermore, if Eduardo had been a renegade of a “group of founders” then why would they have allowed Eduardo to be the Rector for these first eight Cursillo Weekends?

I can assure you that there is no doubt in the minds of any of the four National Staff members, that Eduardo is the one and only true founder of the Cursillo de Cristiandad (short course in Christianity).

In addition to coming to the realization that Eduardo is the true founder of the Cursillo Movement we also gained a great deal of insight into the authentic understanding of the Cursillo Movement as it was originally established by the Holy Spirit, through the person

of Eduardo Bonnín. Before going into this insight, it must be understood that this is a culmination of a course of action that has been set out for us and we have merely been guided along.

During the late 1980's and early 1990's our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II requested that all religious orders and ecclesiastical groups go back and search their foundational charism. A foundational charism is the gift provided by the Holy Spirit, which sets that particular group apart and provides a unique contribution to the Roman Catholic Church. The Cursillo Movement accepted that challenge and set forth to study our own charism during the 5th World Encounter held in Seoul, Korea in 1997. One year later, the Holy Father asked the leaders of all ecclesiastical groups to gather in Rome, along with the Pontifical Council for the Laity. There were 54 groups present for this meeting. The purpose of that meeting was to realize that each group has a unique contribution to the Roman Catholic Church and that none of our groups (movements) individually are able to do everything, however, all of our groups collectively can do so. Each group, in order to be true to itself, needs to understand the parameters of its foundational charism and remain true to that charism.

In 1994 the 50th Anniversary, of the 1st Cursillo Weekend, was celebrated in Mallorca, Spain. The title for this celebration was *The 1st Conversations of Cala Figuera*. By now, most of you are aware that Cala Figuera is the name of the little fishing village where the 1st Cursillo de Cristiandad was conducted. I can honestly say that I did not grasp the importance of this celebration at that time. It may have been the poor simultaneous translations, it may have been my limited experience as the National Executive Director (I had only been serving in this capacity for 1 ½ years by this time), or it may have been my misunderstanding of the Cursillo Movement based on information that I had at that time.

It wasn't until my meetings with Eduardo in April 2002 that I began to put everything together and finally begin to understand the full value of the Cursillo Movement.

What I am about to share will cause considerable reaction by everyone who reads this. I have struggled with this for some time and I have discussed this with Bishop Tamayo, the Cursillo Movement's National Episcopal Advisor. Bishop Tamayo told me that if I know that it is the right thing to do then I must share this information.

Over the course of the years the Cursillo Movement in the United States (particularly the English-speaking) has followed a particular path that has come about as a result of several factors. The majority of those factors has been Vatican II, Christifideles Laici (Christ's Lay Faithful), Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelization in the Modern World, and information expressed by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II. In 1988, during the 4th World Encounter in Caracas, Venezuela, changes were made to the Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement. It must also be noted that Eduardo Bonnín had been deliberately excluded from the list of those invited to this World Encounter. From this meeting, a Master Document for the revised Fundamental Ideas was produced. Each language element was allowed to translate this document as long as the translations were "faithful to the Master Document." The English-speaking language group was granted additional leniency with regards to specific words.

The term “Piedad” as listed in the Master Document translates to “Piety”, however, the English-speaking were allowed to change this to “Holiness” for a couple of reasons. First, Pope John Paul II has been urging for a “call to holiness” amongst all Catholics. Second, the purpose of “piety” is to lead us to “holiness” and we should strive for the goal instead of the means to achieve the goal.

The term “Estudio” as listed in the Master Document translates to “Study”, however the English-speaking were allowed to change this to “Formation” since “study” is something that you do to lead to “formation” and we should strive for the goal instead of the means to achieve the goal.

The term “Acción” as listed in the Master Document translates to “Action”, however the English-speaking were allowed to change this to “Evangelization” for a couple of reasons. First, the mission of the Church is “evangelization.” Second, “action” is something that you do that hopefully leads to “evangelization” and for that reason we should strive for the goal instead of the means to achieve the goal.

In 1992 the new English version of *The Fundamental Ideas for the Cursillo Movement* became available with this new terminology. The National Office started to strongly urge all diocesan Cursillo Movements to begin utilizing the new terminology. This was met with mixed feeling throughout the United States with most diocesan Cursillo Movements reluctantly making the switch.

During a National meeting of regional and diocesan leaders in Little Rock, Arkansas (1990) a new Cursillo Evangelization Workshop was presented to the English-speaking leaders. This workshop brought forth the need to develop Cursillo-like group reunions within the various environments of home, work, neighborhood and social groups. Emphasis was being placed on fulfilling the directives of Vatican II’s *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*. This decree states that the laity is responsible for restoring the temporal order of society. The temporal order includes those aforementioned environments.

When I became Executive Director in 1992, I noticed that there were remarkable differences between the English-speaking cursillistas and the Spanish-speaking cursillistas. I quickly set out to create what I hoped would be unity amongst our Movement. In the past, at National meetings, the Spanish-speaking participants studied things that were different from what the English-speaking participants were studying. I resolved to have the same content at all of our National Meetings, even if we had to separate for the sake of the presentations being given in two different languages.

In 1998, as the National Secretariat was in the process of developing a new 3-Day Manual, I soon became aware of some basic fundamental differences between the way the English-speaking viewed the Cursillo Movement and the way the Spanish-speaking viewed the Cursillo Movement. As we were nearing the completion time for this manual, various concessions were made by both the English-speaking and the Spanish-speaking in order to get the manual to print. During a special session of the National Secretariat (August 1999) it was decided that the 3-Day Manual would be used for a period of three full years (August

2002). Following that 3-year period recommendations would be received to try to fine-tune the 3-Day Manual and hopefully have one manual for one “Cursillo Movement.”

During the month of April 2002, Jorge Barcelo and I went to Mallorca, Spain to attend the 2nd Conversations of Cala Figuera. During that visit, we took the time to meet with Eduardo on three different occasions for 3-hours each time. During that meeting Eduardo stated that we in the United States put too much emphasis on the environments. He said that if the conversion of the person (heart and mind) were natural then they would not need to be urged to evangelize. It would be a natural outpouring of their natural conversion.

This comment made me remember a disagreement that I had with the former President of Ireland’s Cursillo Movement (Mary Dolan). Mary said that the purpose of the Cursillo Movement was to transform the person – nothing more. I argued and said that the purpose of the Cursillo Movement is to transform the person so that the person can go out and Christianize his or her environments. After all, that is more in line with the mission of the Church.

When I asked Eduardo about this situation, he assured me that Mary had the correct understanding of the Cursillo Movement. Needless to say, I was quite taken aback. As we continued to talk, Eduardo slowly helped me to understand the difference. We had been placing the “Mission of the Church - Evangelization” as the purpose of the Cursillo Movement. We had done it in Caracas, Venezuela, we had done it in Little Rock, Arkansas and I had been trying to do it in the 3-Day Manual.

I remember now, that meeting in Rome with the delegates of 54 different ecclesiastical groups. Each one of those groups is responsible for fulfilling the “Mission of the Church - Evangelization” since they were all groups within the Church. Every Roman Catholic, regardless of whether he or she is involved with one of these 54 ecclesiastical groups or not, is responsible for fulfilling the “Mission of the Church – Evangelization.” Fulfilling the mission of the Church is part of our baptismal responsibility. Cursillo, like all the other groups, helps us to fulfill our baptismal responsibility and it does so according to a unique charism and that charism is fulfilled according to a specific methodology.

Now I finally understood the foundational charism of the Cursillo Movement. The purpose of the Cursillo Movement is so very simple. We are tasked with helping each person have a triple encounter. First, we need to provide the opportunity to allow each person to have an encounter with self (this is accomplished during Friday of the 3-Day Cursillo Weekend). Second, we need to provide the opportunity to allow each person to have an encounter with God (this is accomplished during Saturday of the 3-Day Cursillo Weekend). Finally, we need to provide the opportunity to allow each person to have an encounter with others (this is accomplished during Sunday of the 3-Day Cursillo Weekend and it focuses on Group Reunion and Ultreya as being key to this encounter with others).

Please do not take this to mean that the Cursillo Movement is no longer going to encourage environmental transformation. Since the Cursillo Movement is a movement of the Church, we will always encourage evangelization, just as the 53 other ecclesiastical groups do. The

only difference is that our focus has to be on the authentic purpose of the Cursillo Movement and, I can assure you that if we do this, then the transformation of our environments will come about more naturally than in the past.

I asked Eduardo about the changes that came forth from the 4th World Encounter in Caracas, Venezuela in 1988. He stated that he was disappointed about the changing of the words Piedad, Estudio and Acción (Piety, Study and Action) to Holiness, Formation and Evangelization. When I explained the rationale that I have promoted for the past 10 years he informed me that it is impossible to achieve a goal if you do not focus on the means to attain the goal. He referred to the Ideal rollo wherein it states that our Ideals must be attainable. If they are lofty then we might become discouraged and abandon the Ideal. The same is true with the Cursillo tripod. It is true that the purpose of piety is to attain holiness, however, if one only focuses on the goal of holiness, and is not presented the means to achieve it then that person could soon become discouraged and give up on the goal. The same is true concerning the means to achieve formation and evangelization.

As Eduardo talked about these things I thought of the United State's Space Program. In the year 1900 I am sure that there were people who thought about the goal of reaching the moon, however, they did not have the means to achieve that goal and so for them it remained nothing more than a lofty ideal. As technology advances were made scientists began focusing on the means to attain this ideal. As each decade progressed and the means became more viable scientists were finally able to achieve this goal in 1969. Now, we have a goal to put someone onto Mars. This is by no means a lofty ideal, however, we still do not have the means to achieve this goal. And so, for the time being, scientists focus their attention and abilities on securing the means and eventually the goal will be attained.

Likewise we should never lose sight that the purpose for the Cursillo tripod of piety, study and action is so that all of us will be able to achieve holiness, formation and evangelization.

For several years now we have encouraged our diocesan and regional leaders to work to assure an authentic Cursillo Movement. How could we do so if we, as National Staff, were not also willing to make that commitment. And so, from April 2002 until now I have struggled with how to present what I have come to know about the authentic Cursillo Movement.

The content of this year's 13th National Encounter was a first step to help cursillistas understand the basic mentality that went into the formation of the Cursillo Movement. Next, it was important to have all of our National language Coordinators go to Mallorca to hear first-hand and to experience the Cursillo Movement in its birthplace. We spent 10 days with Eduardo and other local cursillistas. We went to the Ultreya. We went to Cala Figuera and to San Honorato (site of the first numbered Cursillo Weekend). We experienced Mallorca.

Upon our return to the United States all of us met with the National Secretariat's Executive Committee and we shared what we had learned. The Executive Committee was overjoyed with the information that we presented and they wanted us to pass this onto the National Secretariat right away. Originally we felt it would be better if we waited to address this

information with the Secretariat at their November meeting due to all the things that they had to address during their July 2003 meeting. As time drew nearer for the July 2003 meeting we realized that we needed to address this topic as soon as possible. Following our presentation to the National Secretariat one member made a motion to allow the National Staff to take whatever actions are necessary to ensure true authenticity of the Cursillo Movement. Immediately, the remaining members seconded the motion in unison. I informed the National Secretariat that my first order of business would be to get the information to all the dioceses as quickly as possible.

As you can tell this is already an extensive write up. There is no way that this issue can be properly addressed in just a few words. We will continue to provide more information in future mailings. Please keep watching for these updates.

There are many diocesan and regional leaders who have diligently followed the instructions provided by the National Office. As the Executive Director, I too was following the vision as it was presented to me at the moment; following the teachings, experiences of Cursillo leaders (diocesan, Regional and National) and the literature as it was presented. I regret the fact that many diocesan and regional leaders have endured much in their efforts to conform to instructions provided by the National Office. But, now that I have this knowledge, I am compelled to do whatever is necessary to put the Cursillo Movement back on its proper course.

The National Secretariat, its Executive Committee and the National Staff are extremely excited about the prospects of the Cursillo Movement, now that we have a better understanding of the Cursillo Movement as it was intended by its founder, Eduardo Bonnín. We greatly appreciate the many prayers that are offered for the work of the National Cursillo Center and its staff. We likewise pray that it is your prayers, the grace of God and the prodding of the Holy Spirit that have brought us to this level of understanding. As I have often shared, my daily prayer is that I will be able to understand God's Will and that I will have the courage and ability to fulfill His Will. Please continue to pray that the National Secretariat, the Executive Committee and the National Staff will be properly guided to do God's Will.

We plan to have another mailing within two weeks. That mailing will address some more important issues dealing with the Cursillo Movement. Be sure to keep on the lookout for that mailing.

Your Servants in Christ,

**Thomas Sarg – National Executive Director
Jorge Barcelo – National Spanish-speaking Coordinator
Victor Lugo – National English-speaking Coordinator
Joachim Le – National Vietnamese-speaking Coordinator
Gail Terrana – National Staff Administrative Assistant**