

September 2005

To: National Mailing Recipients  
Fm: National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Center  
Re: September National Mailing

### POPE'S REFLECTION ON CURSILLO



Pope Benedict XVI

For insight into how the Pope views Cursillo, we can look to a 1985 book then Cardinal Ratzinger wrote with the journalist Vittorio Messori: *Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*. Here is a passage from pages 43-44 of that book:

*"What sounds full of hope throughout the universal church - and this even in the midst of the crisis that the Church is going through in the Western world - is the upsurge of new movements that no one has planned and no one called into being, but that simply emerge of their own accord from the inner vitality of the faith. What is becoming apparent in them - albeit very faintly - is something very similar to a pentecostal hour in the Church.*

*I am thinking for instance of the Charismatic Renewal movement, the Cursillo movement, the Focolarini, Communion and Liberation, and so on... I find it marvelous that the Spirit is once more stronger than our programs and brings himself into play in an altogether different way than we had imagined.... It grows in silence. Our task - the task of the office-holders in the Church and of theologians - is to keep the door open to them, to prepare room for them..."*

### FROM OUR NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

My dear brothers and sisters Cursillistas:

It is no coincidence that you and I attended the 15<sup>th</sup> National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Encounter. It is Providence at work. I believe that it is God's Divine Plan that creates the possibility, structures the opportunity, and provides the Grace of the Holy Spirit, to allow us to enter into His Divine Will.

However, God also gave us free will so that we can choose either to accept or reject His plan of salvation for one's self and for humanity. As children of God, brothers and sisters of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit, we have the awesome responsibility of being authentic and effective Christians and messengers of joy in our environments.

**To do this, we must be authentic witnesses of the Gospel first, acknowledging our limitations, expectations, and inspirations so that we may begin or continue the process of conversion; so that we may become authentic Christians, authentic messengers.**

**Daily, we must strive for a more sincere and intimate relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ because it is only through Him, with Him, and in Him, that we can discover the profound conviction necessary to make Gospel-centered decisions in our Christian walk.**

**It is absolutely essential that these two changes, these two profound transformations occur in our person, so as to have a progressive conversion consciously and ever-growing in grace. A conversion that will impress upon others the genuineness of our Christian action, a commitment to holiness that is aptly demonstrated by our love for one another.**

**It is through the three encounters with self, with God, and with others that Cursillos in Christianity enables the person to be who we truly are, to enter into an intimate relationship with self and with God, in order to bring the Good News to our prospective environments by proclaiming that God the Father, through Jesus Christ, loves us. This message is manifested by our joyful state of grace that is best communicated through friendship to each and every person that you and I encounter in our daily life.**

**I, therefore, encourage all of us to continue to live out our baptism through the Cursillo method of piety, study, and action, and to share our understanding of these three intimate relationships – with the self, with God and with others -- within our friendship group reunions.**

**My dear sisters and brothers in the Lord, as Cursillistas we have been called to be apostles, which is a great honor. This does not mean that we were chosen because we have distinguished ourselves among many other Catholics as an outstanding person and Christian. The honor should come from our faith, fidelity, love, and service to God's people. If we seek honor for own sake, we will not fulfill our mission well.**

**The most important aspect of honor to a Cursillista lies in the responsibility of fulfilling the vocation of baptism, which is to proclaim the Good News that God loves us, in all our environments by being authentically Christian.**

**The person who has lived a Cursillo cannot hide. Cursillistas are always visible to all. We should always be aware that whatever happens in our life takes on greater meaning in our environments, in our diocesan Cursillo Movement, in our Regions, and in the National Cursillo Movement. Just as Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and Vowed Religious help form the faith of the community primarily by their example of prayers, generosity, and their attitude to love, so also, we, Cursillistas, should reflect our faith, hope, and love by our example of generosity in our behavior.**

**As Eduardo Bonnín reminds us, *“We have always understood the laity, as the normal realization of what is Christian, by the means of the daily realities – the family, job, entertainment, friendship, and love – formed and expressed in a search, in these same realities, for what is good, for the truth and for the beauty, by means of a deep personal relationship, with the persons that are there.”***

**I believe our primary responsibility must be the transformation of ourselves. As we surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ, we place ourselves in the disposition to help others and we contribute to build the Kingdom of God. However, we must faithfully fulfill our daily duties in life by embracing all circumstances that God presents to us through His providence, offering us the opportunity to perform in love to one another. Whether we are married, single, at home, at work, whether we are dedicated to the priestly or religious life, in whatever we do, we must always seek God's divine will. May all our actions be lived in a way that fulfills God's will, for in this way alone is the kingdom of God promoted and it is done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Finally, we must always be conscious that it is through our Lord Jesus Christ that we are transformed and rendered capable of transmitting God's love to others through friendship. As Cursillistas we are called to be saints, apostles, men and women of our time in a particular way so the holiness of the Mystical Body of Christ, God's Church, entrusted to our care, may increase and deepen.**

**I encourage you to be faithful to the Foundational Charism of the Cursillos in Christianity and allow the Spirit and Love of God to give fruit in its due time. Have faith and trust in God that He will not abandon us in our efforts to bring the Good News that He loves us.**

**However, we should also realize and believe that the greater part of our faith is also to believe that God's faith toward us is greater than our faith in Him.**

**This truth has been seen and realized in time because God has entrusted us with spreading the message of His Good News of salvation. The reason God has faith in us is because we are created in His image. Our desire for good, our desire for truth, and our desire for beauty is the essential of this image. We should therefore treat one another with respect and dignity by accepting each other's capacity and potential to serve God's people.**

**On behalf of the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Secretariat and Staff, I would like to thank each of you for making the sacrifice for attending the 15<sup>th</sup> National Encounter. I encourage you to share with your dioceses what our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed to you, in order to continue building the Kingdom of God.**

**De Colores and God Loves you!**

**Your brother in Christ,  
*Victor Lugo*  
National Executive Director**

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 15<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL ENCOUNTER**

**The highlight of the Encounter began Thursday evening with Eucharistic Adoration. Most Reverend José H. Gomez, S.T.D., Archbishop of San Antonio, prepared us for adoration by giving the opening talk on the Eucharist. There were 599 Cursillistas in attendance. We enjoyed the Benedictine College's atmosphere and the prayers of the cloistered monks living in the Abbey. The Very Reverend Barnabas Senecal, OSB, who is the Abbot of St. Benedicts Abbey, gave us a warm welcome and celebrated a joyful Mass with us on Friday.**

We are also, most grateful to Bishop James Tamayo, our National Episcopal Advisor, for supporting and sharing with us throughout the Encounter.

The workshops throughout Friday and Saturday centered on “friendship” and how it is integrated within the essence, purpose and methodology of Cursillo. Friendship is the best means that brings us to the reality that Jesus Christ loves us. We featured a book entitled, “Friendship: The Art of Happiness” by Dr. John Cuddeback which is still available through the National Cursillo® Center (check our website). This book explains the importance of virtues in the role of true friendship. Through this genuine friendship, we are able to be true messengers of joy as was our theme for the Encounter.

The Encounter culminated on Saturday with a spirit-filled and joyful fiesta celebration. We had several cultural groups perform songs or dances in English, Korean, Filipino, Spanish, and Vietnamese, etc. We were truly blessed to experience the Church and its diverse cultures in the spirit of friendship.

### **THE HOLY EUCHARIST: THE SACRAMENT OF UNITY**

In the homily at the closing Holy Mass of the 24<sup>th</sup> Italian National Eucharistic Congress in Bari, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI said, *“The Eucharist, let us repeat, is the sacrament of unity. But, unfortunately, Christians are divided precisely on the sacrament of unity. All the more reason, therefore, that, supported by the Eucharist, we must feel stimulated to tend with all our strength toward that full unity that Christ ardently desired.”*

Our Holy Father’s above remark is an appropriate reminder of the unity within our Cursillo Movement. It is unfortunate to admit the fact that many Cursillistas are divided on many aspects of our Movement, in particular, on the Three-Day Weekend. The division on the selection of the candidates as well as on the formation of the team members results from the Weekends being conducted by some leaders in their own way to satisfy their agenda and/or their ego. Some leaders even claim their ownership of certain Weekends of which they serve as coordinators, as rollistas or as team members. Consequently, they feel free to add any activities, any elements or certain rituals, which may psychologically move the candidates to tears. These leaders are the typical Cursillistas who enjoy seeing the candidates’ on-the-spot conversion exactly like treating their instant coffee, tea or TV dinners. Thus, the essential elements of the Weekend such as the personal contact, community spirit, friendship ... are entirely ignored or neglected. No wonder, some diocesan Cursillo Movements remain dormant, and desperately wait for the Weekends, which those leaders believe, could revive them, at least for some time right before and after the Weekend. Some Cursillo leaders, including the clergy, still consider the Weekend indispensable to them and they insist upon putting it on every year, regardless of the situation of the candidates, team members or any unfavorable circumstances. Division is unavoidable!

If the National Policy were properly and responsibly obeyed by all leaders at all levels, our Cursillo Movement would be always the motive for unity in our diocesan, regional and national Cursillo communities, and ultimately within our Catholic Church. The Policy requires that a diocesan Movement “prepare candidates for the Weekend as outlined in the Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement and in the latest edition of the Leader’s

Manual and other literature of the Cursillo Movement related to candidate guidelines.” The Policy also clearly requests the diocesan Cursillo leaders to eliminate from the Three-Day Weekend all non-essential elements, and any activities that have the potential to distract the candidates from the true purpose of the Three Days.

Furthermore, Rev. Frank S. Salmani from the Diocese of Providence, N.Y., in his book “Whom Shall I Send”, gave this useful advice to all Cursillo leaders: “Unlike an organization, a body is not a structure. It does not concern itself with established rules, but with function. Please understand that we are not saying that a body does not have a structure, but that it is not a structure. A body still needs rules to exist in order to allow the body to function properly, but the rules are based on function and necessity. The rules in a body exist only in order to keep the body healthy.....Each part or “cell” functions according to its natural law. These laws are the “essentials” of the body, without which the body could not function. In the same way, the Church and Her movements operate as a body. Each member or cell has a function in the body. Each function is different and not every part can function every way. The Lay Director is not the Spiritual Advisor. The Spiritual Advisor is not the Lay Coordinator of the Three-Day Weekend. Each person has his or her own function. How does this structure stay together? It stays together by the unifying power of Jesus. By being attentive to the Head, each member of the body will perform its proper function; and what are the rules of order within the Body of Christ? Very simply, in order for the Body of Christ to function properly, its leaders must concern themselves with service, self-surrender and sacrifice, not status and recognition.” (Chapter 13: A “Body” of Leaders)

The Holy Eucharist is the indispensable element of our Cursillo Movement, including during our Three-Day Weekends. It is quite fitting to quote the following statement by Our Holy Father Benedict XVI in his above-mentioned homily as a conclusion to this article: *“The Christ whom we encounter in the sacrament is the same Christ who is present in the Eucharistic bread everywhere on earth. This means that we can only encounter Him together with all others. We can only receive Him in unity.”*

Joachim Thong Tinh Le  
Feast of the Assumption 2005

## PIETY

In the last two mailings we have shared about the Ideal and Laity rollos. Following the sequence of the rollos (laity rollos), in this mailing we would like to share about one of the strong pillars which helps us to sustain our Christianity: Piety

The atmosphere, at the time of this rollo, the candidates may be very confused, because although they have been impacted by the ideas of the previous rollos, they don’t see how they can manage to achieve this in a practical and specific way in their own lives.

Situation - It is the last rollo of the first day which completes the second phase of the Cursillo (Proclamation of the message) and prepares for the third phase – the conversion phase or development of the “Christian Life”. The Piety rollo, if it is handled well, is one of the most effective rollo of the Cursillo. It should be presented in such a way that the candidates may see in the leader the incarnation of the truths revealed in the “Habitual

Grace” (currently called “Grace”) and “Actual Grace’ rollo (currently called “Faith”) through the witness of his/her conviction and joy.

Piety is the rollo in which the participant's values are most often realigned. Piety is the orientation of our life towards God. The candidates begin to make the transition to putting God first in his/her life. The effect comes partly from the skillful handling of the false conceptions of Piety, however the rollista should not spend too much time on this subject (ten minutes maximum should be sufficient). This rollo must counteract the prejudices and false concepts regarding piety by pointing out its more ridiculous postures in a very graphic manner. The first false idea should be treated humorously; the second can have humor, but should be treated with sympathy. The third should be treated with strength. The false concepts single out images of what religion has been influencing the candidates, often subconsciously. Once these ideas are brought to consciousness, they can easily be disposed of. It is vital to firmly establish the true concept of piety and highlight the characteristic notes of true piety.

But the principal impact of the rollo comes from the personal witness of the rollista. In the rollista, the candidates see in a concrete way what it is to live a life of true piety. They see how successful and how attractive it can be. What before was meaningless or distasteful to them now becomes something they have seen not only as valuable and attractive, but possible.

The witness of the rollista's conversion and his/her progressive growth is given throughout the rollo. It is important to let the candidates hear that the rollista is an ordinary person, who lives a life much like their own. The rollista must keep in mind that the concept is not to shock; but to show how any person, even the candidates themselves, can turn to God and become "a new person".

The rollista is trying to convey to the candidates what it means to live totally for God. The rollista does not necessarily have to talk about a dramatic change, or a big conversion. Directing one's whole life to God is usually a process, and even if it involves a dramatic change at one point, there are usually a number of other points where the rollista made significant improvements in their life.

The rollo is meant to be delivered with strength. The message should be kept simple, direct and to the point – the only adequate response to the gift of grace of God is to totally surrender to Him.

### **The Piety Rollo**

The re-Christianization of the world should be based upon: Piety, Study and Action.

Piety is: The **Orientation of our whole life Towards God; Authentic Ideal**

- **Orientation** - Precise understanding of what we place in the first plane
- **Of our whole life** - All our realities and possibilities
- **Towards God** - Transcendent understanding of our mission
- **Authentic Ideal** - Our life determined by God's conquest and our conquest of the world to God.

**The main points to be made on the rollo are:**

- Authentic Piety is a life of Grace that is conscious.
- Conscious of the awareness that by Grace I am part of the Mystical Body of Christ

- Conscious of God's love, and of the continued presence of Christ among us in the Eucharist.
- Conscious that the hour has come to ask ourselves this question: Am I a living member of the Mystical Body of Christ, or a dead member? Am I a blockage (like a blood clot) not allowing it to reach to others?
- Authentic Piety is also a life of Grace that is growing.
  - Our relationship with God, our life of Grace, must be constantly growing.
  - Our life of Grace is growing for when we direct our lives to God, each act in our life increases our Grace, "Everything you do or say, then should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father" (Col. 3:17).
- Piety is life of Grace that is shared
  - Because we are Church, we allow ourselves to be truly present to others, to be God's channel of Grace.
  - Sharing our Christianity; sharing our Grace, being open to people and expressing to them the reason for our joy and happiness: **THAT GOD LOVES US!**
- Piety is life, and life is Knowing, Wanting and Doing.
  1. Knowing - What is done and the reason it's done, excluding routine, mechanical, unconscious, and irrational practices.
  2. Wanting – we want to live in conscious, growing grace, because we want to be saints now, this very moment.
  3. Doing – we serve our Lord doing what He asks of us, what He expect of us.
- Piety is the love for the Kingdom of God and service in the Kingdom of God.
  - That which is translated into the orientation of our whole life towards God.
- Piety is an Authentic Ideal If the ideal is the sum of ideas, plans or goals that drive us to achieve an objective, our piety constitutes a true and complete ideal, since it is nothing less than the whole of our life dedicated to God. Piety then is the means to achieve our goal... Holiness.
- Piety must be lived:
  - a) Natural: We want our Christianity founded on our humanity; the confidence of a child in its Father.
  - b) Courageous: We know that the world belongs to God and that God "lends" it to the brave.
  - c) Strong: We are willing to acknowledge the faith that we profess, without blushing or caring what anyone thinks.
  - d) Joyful: We make the well-known phrase a reality: "A sad saint is a meaningless saint".
- Our Piety life must be nourished
  - Just as all life is nourished by some kind of food, and one trains by doing, we practice our piety by means of some spiritual acts, the exercising of the Sacraments and offering everything we do to God. (Although this will be discussed in more detail on the rollo "Life in Grace", the rollista should witness on how they have nourished their Spiritual life).
- The perfection of our piety will be the Apostolate, bringing alive this life in others.

- We are generous and we want the best for others, so that Christ may live in them too; and their lives are directed totally towards God, living a life of Grace conscious and growing, living Christianity to its fullness.

### **PUBLICATION UPDATE**

There is a new book available in Spanish, titled, “II Conversaciones de Cala Figuera”. The cost is \$8.00. The Spanish version of the Pilgrim’s Guide has been revised and now includes the Luminous Mysteries of the Holy Rosary. The book, *The Evangelizing Catholic*, by Frank P. De Siano, C.S.P., available in English, is on sale for \$3.00 while supplies last.

### **NEW NATIONAL CURSILLO GIFT SHOP**

The National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement has acquired all Cursillo related merchandise from Cursillo Connection. Merchandise will be sold by the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Gift Shop operated by the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Center. A new website is being developed for the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Gift Shop. Stay tuned!

### **THE NATIONAL CURSILLO WEB SITE**

We continue to encourage you to visit our National Cursillo Website. All palanca requests are handled through our website. Join affiliated dioceses around the United States in sending your prayers and sacrifices for the success of their 3-Day Cursillo Weekends and other Cursillo events. The e-Ultreya magazine can be found on the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> web site. To submit your 4<sup>th</sup> Day Witness, go to the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Website at [www.natl-cursillo.org](http://www.natl-cursillo.org) and click on “e-Ultreya Magazine”, “submit an article”. Type your witness article and submit it to the editors. After being reviewed, your article may be posted to subsequent editions. This allows all Cursillistas, in the United States and the world, the opportunity to reflect on your witness of what is fundamental for being a Christian. It is easy to connect to other Catholic Cursillo<sup>®</sup> web sites from our Affiliated Links page.

### **EVANGELIZATION WALK**

**THANK YOU!** We thank all the Dioceses for their participation in the Evangelization Walk this year. A generous supply of T-shirts are available, so contact the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Center if your diocese has plans for an Evangelization Walk this year.

### **APPEAL LETTER**

Enclosed with this mailing is an appeal letter imploring donations from Cursillistas. The letter is sent by the Finance Committee on behalf of the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement. Please share this appeal letter with all Cursillistas in your dioceses.

## **PALANCA INTENTIONS**

**Mondays – for all Secretariats**

**Tuesdays – for all Schools of Leaders**

**Wednesdays – for all Cursillistas in the United States**

**Thursdays – for the Cursillo Movement’s Apostolic Actions**

**Fridays – for all 3-Day Cursillo Weekends**

**Saturdays – for the VI World Encounter**

**Thank you for joining the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement of the United States in offering *palanca* for these intentions.**

**Your Servants in Christ,**

**Victor Lugo – National Executive Director**

**Ceferino Aguillón – National English-speaking Coordinator**

**Jorge Barceló – National Spanish-speaking Coordinator**

**Joachim Le – National Vietnamese-speaking Coordinator**

September 1, 2005

Dear Cursillista of the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement,

We greet you and wish God's blessings on you and your family. We pray that having lived the 3-Day Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Weekend, you are utilizing the method of Cursillo in your daily life and in your walk with Jesus. As a Cursillista, and member of your diocesan Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement, you are part of the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement of the United States.

The United States Cursillos in Christianity has a National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Center located in Dallas, Texas. This Center organizes the operations of the National Secretariat, which safeguards the essence, purpose, and methodology of the Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement. For more information on the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement, we invite you to visit our website at [www.natl-cursillo.org](http://www.natl-cursillo.org)

We, the Finance Committee of the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement, are writing to request financial contributions from you for the benefit of continuing the work of the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement. The National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement receives income via two major avenues, annual diocesan affiliation fees and the sales of books and materials. In the past, there have been sizeable gifts bestowed to the Movement. However, these gifts were one-time gifts and have ceased to exist. Expenses never cease though. On the contrary, we know too well their astonishing increase to the detriment of creating a much wider gap with income.

We are asking you to consider making a monetary donation to the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement. Perhaps you can consider giving the equivalent of one hour's pay per week, per month or per year. Checks can be made payable to "National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Center" and mailed to PO Box 210226; Dallas, Texas 75211. Or you may be moved to make a donation of an item from our "Wish List" (see back). If you are in a position to provide any of these items please contact the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Center for information and details at 214-339-6321 or email us at [nationalcursillo.center@verizon.net](mailto:nationalcursillo.center@verizon.net). We hope you are able to contribute in some way. Remember, your donation to the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement, a 501(c) (3) entity, is tax deductible.

We rely on God and your generosity to receive what we will need. Please pray and ask God to lead you – you are the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement! We thank God for you and we know that you are an evangelical witness of the Good News that "God Loves You"!

Thank you for your consideration. Please keep the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement in your prayers.

Your brothers and sister in Christ,

Jim Wells, Diego Melians, Kathy Springer  
The Finance Committee of the National Cursillo<sup>®</sup> Movement

**National Cursillo® Movement**  
**“Wish List”**

- 1. Data projector with 1024x768 resolution (3)**
- 2. Laptop/Notebook computer (2)**
- 3. Language translator software for Windows XP (4)**
- 4. Desks (4)**
- 5. Metal Industrial Shelves (30)**
- 6. Van – 8 passenger**
- 7. U-Haul Trailer**
- 8. Conference table with 10 chairs**
- 9. Dry-Erase Board 48” x 96” with stand**
- 10. Windows XP compatible Computer with monitor**
- 11. Scanners (2)**
- 12. Work bench cabinet (6)**
- 13. Storage cabinets (3)**
- 14. File cabinets – four drawer (8)**
- 15. Telephone System with (6) telephone**
- 16. Cell Phones (4)**
- 17. Digital Camera, min. 5 mega pixels**
- 18. Tables 6’ Portable folding (15)**
- 19. Label System Electronic**
- 20. Copier high capacity**
- 21. Partition 16’ Freestanding Portable**
- 22. Podium Fully Powered (microphone & speaker)**
- 23. Wooden Book Shelves (4)**
- 24. Television 27” with stand**
- 25. DVD & VHS combination player**
- 26. Digital Camcorder**
- 27. Sofa and living room chairs**
- 28. Mini Blinds 36” x 60” (20)**
- 29. Vacuum Cleaner**
- 30. PC DVD Read/Write drive (6)**