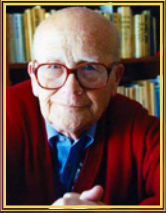


CURSILLOS

in CHRISTIANITY

National Newsletter



Servant of God

Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló

Founder of
Cursillos in Christianity
1917 – 2008

February 2024

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Signs of HOPE

An Interview with Eduardo Bonnín conducted by Bishop Paul Josef Cordes, Final

In early 1997, Eduardo Bonnín received a visit from Bishop Paul Josef Cordes of the Vatican (Cardinal and President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum”). Bishop Cordes was called to interview seven founders from prominent ecclesial Movements in preparation for the First World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, which would be held in 1998 in Rome.

18. Bishop Cordes: How is your Charism reflected in the heart of the modern world?

Eduardo Bonnín: Even though they are obscure, I do not want to doubt the good intentions of those who always use the personal generosity of new converts by giving them an orientation, not towards the world in which they are living, but into the internal affairs of the Church. This is manifested in teaching catechism or visiting senior citizens, etc. since there is a whole range of activities where good people are needed. Is there something better for these people converted in Cursillo? If the result is that this task pleases them, they have a sense of satisfaction, and they believe they have made it. The dynamics of their conversion, which was supposed to continue, are turned in on themselves, and they are very pleased with the good they are doing. They feel satisfied.

We cannot avoid thinking that it would be different and more effective to direct these converts of the Cursillos towards the world, towards their world, where they are living, to live in it as Christians, in a natural way, with joy and spontaneity.

But instead of doing this, the contrary has almost always been promoted: our members have been solicited to be responsible for a course in catechesis, to be part of the parish choir, etc. All this leads on a regular basis, and in a somewhat despairing manner, to the following alternative: if the person is very intelligent but not very holy – I say very holy – he pulls the blanket onto his side, and if he agrees to anything that is asked, he or she can say goodbye to their husband or wife, their children, their work relationships and their friends, because they have no time left for themselves. In my humble opinion, they may become very holy on this path, but they will not be the kind of saints that the world and the Church need today.

In this prearranged setting, those working in the cultural field, in politics, the economy, and in their social life, have been uprooted from their environment where God planted them and have been transplanted into the sphere of pious things. If these people think because they are in the habit of having their ideas and their personality, they are told to pray. I do not wish to think that those who pray cannot be a bother or that a priest can be better served by twenty obedient people rather than someone capable of having his ideas. If a person lives a deep Christian life, with his personality molded by grace, this will allow him to evangelize by being the light, the salt, and the leaven among his work companions and friends and, without any doubt, to influence his environment effectively.

I cannot avoid thinking that one will not go very far if the culture, politics, economy, and social life cannot count on truly Christian people with conviction, determination, and perseverance. Cursillos are not the unique way to achieve it, but where they were used according to their purpose, it was possible to make this a reality, which already, from the beginning, filled us with joy. This is well stated by Fr. Beda Bernegger: “If Christianity is capable of showing the people outside of faith, that it can unite in one family spirit, people of the most diverse social classes, from the academic to the craftsman, from the civil servant to the daily worker, from the businesswoman to the ordinary woman, then the simple reality will act with an irresistible vigor and will become the most perfect tool for the apostolate.”

19. Bishop Cordes: As for you, what relationships do you have with those who do not have faith, who belong to another religion or another Christian denomination?

Eduardo Bonnín: I have excellent relationships, much better than those I have, with those who have always been Christian, who believe that they have made it – and I want to believe that all this is done in goodwill. These Christians, who believe that religious practice is an end unto itself and not a means to achieve the end, it is they who have a hard time understanding that Christians should enter into conversion, on a daily basis, into a process that is more and more ongoing, and that what it is to be in relationship with God, to understand better, to know that one believes rather than believing that one knows.

One of the things for which I will never be thankful enough to God and, without doubt, one of the best gifts that He has given me is to have been invited many times by our Protestant brothers and sisters of the United States. They are brothers and sisters from whom we are separated whom I would call my desired brothers and sisters.

The different invitations I have always accepted are those that had as their goal the opportunity to explain what the Cursillo Movement is and what it is supposed to be. Each meeting has been warm, fruitful, and a source of mutual good. I could speak freely, noting the big difference with the meetings with the “high level” of the OMCC (Organismo Mundial de Cursillos de Cristiandad), where I was never listened to and where the rules give a different direction than the one we, the Founders, have always attempted to follow and are willing to continue to follow.

20. Bishop Cordes: What are the challenges presented to today’s Church?

Eduardo Bonnín: Often, I have asked myself: what is the most pressing need in today’s world: either a people of the Church or a Church of people? What is needed are truly persons, men and women, capable of conviction, determination, and perseverance.

There was a time when human things served to protect the divine things. Today, we note that the divine realities by themselves, if they are lived through people who assume them with conviction and put them into place with determination and perseverance, can serve as references to scientific and technical progress to have the necessary human depth for authentic progress where men and women can feel themselves as brothers and sisters.

Sincerely, I believe that the unique institution which possesses all the qualities for being a direct highway, clear and strong towards the future, is the Catholic Church, on the condition that she be always turned toward the people in the world, and not towards the world of people and that she stops existing solely for herself.

21. Bishop Cordes: According to you, is the Church prepared to face the future?


Eduardo Bonnín: Since the devil never takes vacations, not even, at Christmas, and since he is always on the alert “like a roaring lion”, Christians cannot sleep.

In my humble opinion, the dangers are always the same, and they are all produced by the absence of God in the minds and hearts of human beings. The numerous offenses prevalent today, as well as yesterday and forever, all have a similar cause. If we reflect well, we always come to the same conclusion as the sisters of Lazarus when Christ came to them after their brother’s death: “If you had been here, our brother would not have died.”

I have always thought that when the Church has failed to be human because of the frailty of her people, she has also failed to be Christian. And that which is Christian, when not human, is not Christian.

I believe that what is Christian happens when the wave of the sea of the world hits the cliff of Christian conviction. What counts is that man who lives in the heart of the world, in his lay world, where God has placed him, can see from that place the tremendous power of the attraction manifested in the wonderful meeting between what is human because it is Christian, and what is Christian, because it is human. Bad events can become good in the heart of man.

As a son of the Church, I want to follow what the Pope points out as a direction for the 3rd millennium.

Getting different people to come face to face with themselves, Christ, and their brothers and sisters is, without a doubt, the best means for us to be better prepared to follow with more conviction and spirit the leading of the Church. 

2024 National Cursillo Movement
34TH NATIONAL ENCOUNTER
HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY
Hempstead, NY 11549
JULY 25–28, 2024
More information to follow

