

# WHAT IS CURSILLO?

WHAT IS CURSILLO? The Cursillo (pronounced: Cur-see-yo) de Cristiandad ( Little course in Christianity) is an instrument of renewal which originated in Spain under the direction of Bishop Juan Hervás. It is a highly structured, well thought out method of renewing the faith of individuals and through the individuals, the parishes from which they come and the environment in which they live and work. This renewal is accomplished in cooperation with and under the guidance of the hierarchy and the clergy who themselves participate in the movement.

The movement came to this country in the late 1950s. Since then it has spread to well over half of the dioceses in the world. There are many hundreds of thousands of Cursillistas {persons who have attended a Cursillo) in the United States alone. The movement has also taken root in every continent. The Cursillo has received the blessing of pope Paul VI and the American Hierarchy of Bishops.

## HOW DOES CURSILLO ACCOMPLISH ITS AIMS?

During the three days of a particular Cursillo, priests, brothers and laymen {or nuns and laywomen) live together - study together-communicate with one another to gain a deep, permanent, living awareness of their Faith and of the responsibility that such a deep awareness involves. The Cursillo itself is centered around 15 talk (5 each day) - five given by a priest and ten given by laymen who are part of the "team" composed of men or women who have attended a Cursillo and have had special leadership training in the theology and method of the Cursillo.

After each talk, the men or women discuss the main points of the talk in small groups. The atmosphere in a Cursillo proceeds from the natural means used (talks, discussion, group participation, etc) in combination with the graces sought from the Holy Spirit

## WHO SHOULD MAKE A CURSILLO?

The Cursillo is designed for those Christians who, having been informed of the methods and aims of the Cursillo Movement, believe that the Cursillo can strengthen them in their Faith and bring them closer to Christ in their apostolate. In short, the person who makes a Cursillo should recognize that being a Christian involves responsibility for the apostolic endeavor and should therefore have both the human foundation and moral reserve to accept this responsibility. Men and women over 21 may make a Cursillo. You may make a Cursillo only once in your life, but you are expected to 'build' upon it for the rest of your life. The Cursillo is not a retreat - nor a substitute for a retreat. It does however compliment a retreat. Those who have made a Cursillo usually want to make an annual retreat, and they are encouraged to do so in order to renew their Cursillo resolutions.

## PERSONAL RELEVANCE

Any person wishing spiritual growth who is emotionally and spiritually healthy, will be deeply impressed and pleased with the Cursillo weekend. But there are more lasting values in the Cursillo than just the three day "super weekend".

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The second, longer lasting joy that the Cursillo offers is the incentive for continuous spiritual growth. This method is a systematic long-range program that offers a sensible, "proven method" for revitalizing the lives of Christians. It is done by what is called a "group reunion" and ultreya". (to be explained shortly)

## HOW DOES IT OPERATE?

The Cursillo mentality thinks it is easier and better for us to grow together rather than trying to grow alone. Usually Cursillo comes to a parish when the pastor and a group of parishioners attend the Cursillo weekend. Afterwards they continue to meet for spiritual formation. The members of the parish are linked together in a spiritually satisfying program that helps them support one another in their attempt to remain Christ-centered. The work of the parish renewal is thereby divided among many people. Apostolic enthusiasm is sustained because the parishioners are linked together in friendship founded on Christ.

## WHAT IS THE THREE DAY WEEKEND ALL ABOUT?

The weekend begins on a Thursday evening and ends on Sunday evening. Fifteen talks are given, ten by laymen and five by priests.

The three days activities are interspersed with laughter, recreation, songs, discussion, prayer and assorted moments of reflection and silence. There is nothing dull about a Cursillo weekend. It is full of work enjoyed in the name of Jesus Christ. It is a joyous workshop in the fundamentals of our beautiful Catholic faith where everyone learns by experiencing a living community.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE CURSILLO WEEKEND

The most important contribution that the Cursillo Movement makes to the individual is the follow-up program. This is necessary to give application and method to what is presented on the weekend. It provides the pieces to make the three days of living Christianity, not just a weekend experience, but a lifetime one.

## GROUP REUNION

A group reunion is an informal weekly gathering of three to six friends who share their enthusiastic faith in Jesus Christ. Each person shares his life the areas of prayer, study and action. By

spending about 30 minutes each week in this fashion, we lend support to one another and we sustain apostolic enthusiasm for the most central person in our life - Jesus Christ.

## UTTREYA: PRONOUNCED UL-TRAY-AH

Ultreya is a much larger gathering than the group reunion. This is the gathering of all who have made a Cursillo, from the parish or town. This weekly hour and half meeting to share one's life in Christ builds the Christian community on a wider basis.

## LASTLY

When correctly applied and overseen, the method of Cursillo has very positive results in the spiritual revitalization the parishioners. The influence of Christ on the individual is then transferred to his family, school, place of business, social circle etc. The goal of the Cursillo Movement is to make Christ the Prime Influence in society.

## INTERESTED?

Talk to a friend that has made a Cursillo or ask your church office to help locate a Cursillo community near you. For information on South Carolina Cursillo, check us out at:

<https://charlestdiocese.org/cursillo>

National Cursillo at <https://www.cursillo.org>