

## What Every Priest should know about the Purpose of Cursillo

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From the very beginning, the lay founder of the Cursillo Movement, Eduardo Bonnín, saw a great need for evangelism in the neighborhoods of his environment. The Parish Churches spend much of their energy around the programmatic life of the Church and were not reaching out to those furthest from Christ. He envisioned a movement where people could experience in a simple short course, the depth of God love, and to learn that Christ was counting on them to be his active witnesses in the world.

This fundamental goal is still alive in the Cursillo Movement. Bonnín, called it movement because he envisioned inspired Christians working for Christ in homes and in the streets, just as the apostles were called to work in the streets. It was an inspiration of the Holy Spirit and those early Cursillo's lead to a great upswing in the doing the work of the evangelist. People were trained to share their own faith stories. People were encouraged to be as Christ to the world. People were excited to be the Church, to be the living body of Christ. The mission of the Church was right in front of them, and not far away.

It is also interesting to note that the early Roman Catholic Bishops who supported Cursillo were excited because they saw that Cursillo created Christ Centered, Church Centered leadership for their congregation. This emphasis has led to an effort to domesticate Cursillo. They sought to make it more about creating leaders for the Parish Churches, and less of a movement of lay Evangelists.

In Episcopal Cursillo, you will discover that both these purposes are being emphasized. The Evangelism of our own neighborhoods, and work places is best summarized in the saying "Make a Friend, Be a Friend, Bring a Friend to Christ." The encouragement is to always share one's own faith story with people you know. Share the love of Jesus that you have experienced. This how friends are best lead to Jesus. How you reach out to others you do not know? First befriend them, and then share the faith at the right time. The Movement part of Cursillo is about inspired lay folks bringing others to Jesus and to Church. Many years ago the Alban Institute, in their studying of church growth, determined that 86% of all church growth occurs when a friend invites a friend to Church. The Cursillo movement has been teaching this method since 1944.

The purpose of Cursillo is to first teach the method through the 3 day Cursillo experience, and turn out people who are willing to support one another in doing the work of Christ in the world and in the Church. To be witness' of God's love and joy.