

Some Thoughts on Cursillo Renewal

By the Rev. Bob Outman-Conant

The Cursillo movement in the Diocese of Massachusetts is very near and dear to my heart. My Cursillo Weekend was a major turning point in my life, helping me to see in a deep and real way how my relation to God the Father through His son Jesus Christ is the foundation of my life. My subsequent activities with Cursillo, being on Secretariat, being a spiritual director on other weekends, have helped to strengthen that relationship. Through the 90's and the early part of this century, I experienced Cursillo as alive and full of energy. But lately that has not been the case. Like many of you, perhaps, I have seen discouragement, weariness, and little success. Fewer people are involved and less is being accomplished.

Because I care so much about Cursillo, I have been asked to put down on paper some of my thoughts about what can be done to renew and revitalize Cursillo. But before doing that I believe that it is important to have an accurate understanding of the root causes of our problems and a clear vision of the goals we wish to obtain. A solution can only work if it directly addresses those causes and can be reasonably expected to lead to the goals. Although this sounds simple, it's amazing how often we overlook these preliminary steps, or just assume that everyone knows them and then rush to implement solutions, only to find ourselves later wondering why we have little to show for our efforts. Understanding causes and articulating goals is the essential first step.

In sharing these thoughts with you I realize that I am not the source of all wisdom. I see through the glass darkly. My knowledge is partial. Surely you see things and know things that I don't. And of course, there is the One who sees and knows all. While you read this please be critical. What have I gotten right and what have I missed? Where do you agree and disagree? And most importantly, what, if anything do you hear God saying to you through these pages?

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

I see five things that have happened over the years that have brought us to our present situation. In some cases we have made mistakes. In other cases we're seeing the inevitable result of the way every organization goes through a cycle of life and death. Where we have done wrong, God offers us forgiveness. Where we are affected by powers that are greater than we are, God offers release. And in all cases God offers resurrection and new life. So here follows the root causes of our problem as I see them.

1) We have forgotten our core ministry.

Many organizations wind up being victims of their own success. They lose sight of their original purpose. They try to do too much. They go in too many different directions at once. Eventually they get lost, run out of energy, and die.

Cursillo began with what we now call Reunion Groups and Ultreyas. People met to support one another in their walk with Jesus and to praise and thank God through worship.

What we call our fourth day was the original vision and goal of Cursillo. The weekend was the last piece of the movement to be developed. And its purpose was to prepare people for and support them in living their fourth day.

The weekends were spectacularly successful. People had a deep and profound spiritual experience of the presence of God in their lives. For many it was a life-changing event. But the success itself carried the seeds of future problems.

St. Mark tells us in Chapter 9 verses 2-9 of his Gospel of the transfiguration of Jesus. In the presence of three apostles he appears in all of his divine glory. Peter is so overwhelmed he wants to stay there forever. But Jesus says they must go to Jerusalem for the cross and resurrection. And so, I humbly suggest, we have had a mountain top experience. The weekend became an emotional high that we wanted to prolong and relive. We forgot our calling to go into the everyday world to live and proclaim the Gospel. We put more of our energy into bringing people to the weekends. We didn't work as well at getting them into Reunion Groups and Ultreyas.

2) We have gotten all the low hanging fruit.

Another way to say this is that we have saturated the market. Every organization that comes up with a new product or service finds itself expanding rapidly in the beginning. But then, after everyone who wants their offering has it, further growth becomes more difficult. What is called the Law of the Diminishing Returns sets in. More and more effort is required for less and less gain.

Consider cell phones. When they first came out people were eager for them. Companies couldn't manufacture them and get them out the door fast enough. But now that everyone who wants one has one, what next? These same companies now have to work hard to come up with new ideas to keep sales moving.

And so it has been with Cursillo. When we first started there was a large group of people out there who were predisposed to want what we offered. Sponsors hardly had to explain anything before people signed up for a weekend. Indeed we had trouble holding enough weekends each year to accommodate everyone who wanted to come. But, now, all those people have attended a weekend. Succeeding groups of people that we reach out to will have less natural predisposition to be interested in Cursillo and we will have to work harder to reach them.

We have picked all the low hanging fruit. That was easy. There is still plenty of fruit on the tree. But now we will need a ladder to reach it.

3) We have lost the Rectors.

One of the strengths of Cursillo is that we are a lay led ministry. Although there is a role for clergy to play, we are basically by, about, and for the laity. This is as it should be.

Lay people living their Fourth Day is what we are about. And who better to provide the leadership for this than other laity.

That said, rectors of parishes play a key role in the life of our ministry. They are the gatekeepers, letting us in or keeping us out, saying good or ill about us, or just ignoring us. Up until recently there were many clergy, including a significant number of rectors, who were active members of Cursillo. They gave us access to their parishes and spoke well of us to their parishioners. Almost all of them are now gone, having left the diocese or retired. They have not been replaced. Without the support of the rectors it is hard for us to maintain contact with the Cursillo community and to reach out to potential new members.

Of the clergy now in the diocese many simply don't know anything about us, who we are or what we're about. Others are operating under false impressions. I would venture to say that many think of us as a cult, a secret society, trying to brainwash people. Some would also say that we are anti-gay, that we do not welcome our gay brothers and sisters into our ministry. We have done little to address these issues and correct misunderstandings. Now would be a good time to do so. We should do nothing in a parish without the expressed consent of the rector. Giving them accurate information to correct misconceptions is an important first step.

4) We have been reinforcing failure instead of building on success.

As interest in and attendance at the weekend has declined, we have tried harder and harder to make the weekends happen. As we have poured more resources into the weekend and seeing fewer positive results, it has drained our energy, making it harder to find sponsors willing to invite potential candidates and harder to find people willing to be on team. We are caught in a self reinforcing downward spiral, a vicious circle. And the more we try to break this pattern by trying even harder to make the weekends work, the more energy we draw from the reunion groups and Ultreyas, thus weakening them.

The alternative, building on success, means putting our energy and resources into those activities that are working well, to help them grow and work better, thus creating more energy and resources.

5) We have forgotten an important teaching of Jesus.

In St. Mark's Gospel, chapter 4 verses 1 to 9 and 13 to 20, Jesus teaches us by telling us the parable of the farmer who sowed seed on the ground. The seed fell upon various kinds of soil. Some seed never took root. Other seed grew only for a while and then died. But some seed fell on good soil and produced a rich harvest. Jesus goes on to say that this is even more true for us when we work for the Kingdom of God. Our calling is to be like a farmer. The seed that we sow is our effort to plant the Gospel of Jesus into people's hearts. Many of our efforts will not find a receptive heart. This is not our fault. But some of our effort will find open, willing, and eager hearts. The Gospel will take root here. And by the grace of God it will yield a rich harvest for the kingdom. In this we may rejoice.

This parable is important to us because it reminds us of our calling. We are to plant the seeds. Others will water. God will give the harvest. We are not responsible for the

harvest. Not all the seed we sow will bear fruit. We can let go and turn responsibility for the harvest over to God and concentrate on what is our calling.

General Principles For Renewal

Having analyzed the root causes of our problems, the next step is to articulate clearly our goals, what we want to accomplish and where we want to go. Just as we cannot solve a problem without an accurate understanding of its cause, so we cannot achieve any useful results without a clear understanding of what we want to accomplish. Allow me to present some thoughts about general principles that I believe should be the foundation of our efforts to move forward.

I have often said that we are not in the church business; we are in the Jesus business. We are not called to maintain a human institution; to keep the doors open, to pay the bills, to provide programs. We are called to a divine ministry, to continue to do the work that Jesus began 2000 years ago; to proclaim the Gospel, to prepare people for the coming of the Kingdom of God. We are called to be Jesus' agents, doing His work in the world. As long as we are true to our calling, we cannot fail. God never calls us to failure. God always calls us to success. And God always provides us with all the resources necessary for success. The strength behind us is always greater than any obstacle that may be before us.

If this is true for the church, how much more true is it for Cursillo! Cursillo is not an end in itself. We are not called to keep Cursillo alive. Cursillo is a ministry. It is a means to an end that is greater than itself. Cursillo is an opportunity for us to proclaim the Good News of what God has done for us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When we are faithful to this calling, we can not and will not fail. We have God's promise. And God, by His grace, will see that Cursillo prospers, if that is His will.

God the Father sent His son Jesus Christ into the world to destroy Sin; to set us free from the powers of evil that are greater than we are, that enslave us and prevent us from being the people that God created us to be. The word Sin with the capital 'S' and in the singular means alienation, isolation, being cut off from God and other people. The word sins with a small 's' and in the plural means the daily acts that we do that show the powers of Sin in our lives.

This is a difficult subject for us to talk about. Most people, whether within or outside the church have very negative feelings about the word Sin and its connotations. To them it represents a bunch of mean-spirited people who are trying to stop them from having fun and to give them low self-esteem instead. And besides, sins are what the other person does, not me. The vocabulary, the words themselves, get in the way of the timeless and vital message we have to offer people, the message which will greatly benefit their lives

Throughout history, Christianity has grown and prospered when Christians have proclaimed the Good News of Jesus' victory over Sin. But they have done this by speaking to people in a vocabulary that the people instantly understood. It is always the same Gospel message, but it is presented to people in such a way that it speaks to them and the important issues in their lives. Like a good joke, it doesn't have to be explained. People get it the first

time. Christianity is only alive and healthy as Good News is spoken to people's deepest needs, their deepest spiritual hungers. This is our calling, as individuals and as a Cursillo Community- to speak Good News to people's spiritual hungers. And more than this, to feed and satisfy those hungers.

As I listen to people and observe the world around them, I think I can identify four spiritual hungers. I suggest to you that these four spiritual hungers are concrete manifestations of Sin at work in our lives today. This is real life. This is where people live. This is where they are hurting. And this is where we can speak the Word and where we can act to make a real difference in people's lives.

1) Rest

Most people I know are tired, exhausted and worn out. They are constantly running from one task to another. Never enough time to do everything. Always feeling they should be doing more. Driven by the fear they might miss out on something important, multitasking. Trying to do it all and have it all. Wanting to prove that they are as good as everyone else because they can do everything everyone else is doing. Just try to get even three people in the same room at the same time for any reason and you'll quickly see just how over scheduled everyone is. This lifestyle is killing people; physically, emotionally, spiritually. They are running a race that has no finish line. There is no way they can win.

People recognize this. They know something's wrong. They want to change. They want to get off the merry-go-round. They want rest. They hunger deeply for rest. But they don't know how to get it. They are prisoners of forces that are stronger than they are.

2) Community

People's lives are spread out all over the place. Never ending demands pull us in so many difficult directions at once. We live in one town, work in another, shop in a third, worship in yet another town, and so on. Rarely, do all members of the family eat even one meal per week together. Rarely do they do an activity in common. Automation and self-service means we have less interaction with others. Most people around us are strangers. We do not often have deep personal conversations even with family members, let alone with those outside our families.

People feel lonely, isolated, cut off; that they are hanging out there in the world all by themselves and that no one understands them or cares about them. The high divorce rate is but one consequence of this problem.

And again, people recognize this. People know something is wrong. People yearn for real community, whether in their families, their neighborhoods, at work, or whatever. Loneliness is so painful. Having people close to us who know us, understand us, and care for us is such a comfort.

3) Security

People are afraid. We live in a dangerous world. Twenty-four hours a day the news media, internet, twitter bombards us with stories of disaster, dismemberment, and death. We are being scared out of our wits. Any one at any time and any place can hurt us or our loved ones. No one, no place, no time is safe. Every person you meet is a potential serial killer, child molester, or thief. Every object you touch might contaminate you with germs leaving you to die a slow, horrible, and painful death. And if anything should happen to a member of your family, it's all your fault because if you'd done your job right, it wouldn't have happened.

This is all so ironic because in so many ways life is much safer than it has ever been. We are surrounded by safety devices to protect us from accidents. Modern medicine cures so many illnesses. With the end of the Cold War, nuclear annihilation is no longer a fifteen minute rocket flight away. And yet we feel so much less safe.

People are tired of being afraid, of living in constant danger. They want security, real permanent, substantive security. Not just a quick fix. Not a feel-good solution. But something that works and lasts.

4) Nature

In our increasingly urbanized society, people are being cut off from the natural world around them. We go from our climate controlled homes to our climate controlled cars to our climate controlled workplaces and stores. Landscape companies take care of our yards. Except for an occasional trip to the zoo, we rarely see animals in their environment. Meanwhile, global warming is disrupting ecologies all over the planet and driving plant and animal species to extinction at an unprecedented rate. We may live in this world but we are becoming less and less of this world. And as a result, people feel disconnected from the world around them. They feel something important is missing.

People express this hunger through their concern about climate change and global warming, their desire for vacations to get away from urban and suburban life, and their interest in TV shows, books, magazines, and websites about nature.

It is hard for people to reverse this trend, even in their individual lives. A hectic lifestyle with never-ending demands, our lives more and more encapsulated by buffers between us and the outside world, mitigate against this.

I suggest to you that people being exhausted, lonely, afraid, and disconnected are signs of Sin at work in the world. The desire for rest, community, security, closeness to nature are deep felt spiritual hungers. Our culture has some awareness of these hungers and has tried to deal with them via technology, material possessions, and entertainment among other efforts. Science will solve all our problems. We just need to buy more stuff. Do whatever you want as long as it makes you happy.

Centuries ago the Roman Empire tried to control its people by offering them bread and circuses. It did not work. Our attempts to use the modern equivalent of bread and circuses isn't working either. We are left more exhausted, more lonely, more afraid, and more

disconnected than ever. I submit for your consideration that these solutions our culture offers don't work because they don't address the root causes of our spiritual hungers.

It is at this point that Cursillo comes into the picture. We have Good News to tell people. We do not have to seek rest, community, security, in connection with nature. Jesus Christ brings them to us.

1) Rest

Matthew 11:28. Jesus says, "Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest." When Jesus is the first priority in our lives, when He is the guide and structure of our lives, then we know that all our other commitments and activities are lesser priorities and we don't have to drive ourselves into exhaustion trying to fulfill them all. In the final analysis, the world, our lives, and our loved ones are ultimately in God's hands, not ours. God is the One who will see that everything turns out all right, that everything becomes what it should be. We work with God and join our efforts with His, but it's also okay for us to relax, to rest, and let God be in charge.

Talking about rest is not enough. It is important that Cursillo in all its parts and activities be a time and place of rest and not one more busy event in our already over busy lives; but a real occasion of handing our burdens over to Jesus. And it is important that Cursillo enable people to apply these experiences in their daily lives.

2) Community

Mark 1:16-18 "As Jesus walked along the shore of Lake Galilee He saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, catching fish with a net. Jesus said to them, 'Come with me, and I will teach you to catch people.' At once they left their nets and went with him." From the very beginning of His public ministry, Jesus called people into community. This community was the new Israel, the redeemed and restored people of God. And to those who answered His call, to those who came to Him, that is exactly what He gave them: a place in the new Kingdom of God. He gave their lives meaning and purpose as they reconnected with God and one another.

I suggest that most people's lives today are fragmented and just disjointed and that they have a spiritual hunger for real, authentic community. This is exactly what Jesus wants to give them. In Cursillo we are not to talk about the need for community. We are called to give it. All of our gatherings, regardless of their stated purpose, are opportunities for people to get to know each other in a deep, personal way and to show caring, compassion, and concern for one another.

3) Security

John 10: 27-28 Jesus says "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never die. No one can snatch them away from me." In this dangerous and scary world we do not have the power to create our own ultimate security. None of our human institutions can protect us. We have ample evidence from the news media how our schools, athletics, businesses and community groups can hurt and betray

people physically, emotionally and spiritually. Even the church to the extent that it is a human institution, does the same.

Fortunately, as I said above, we are not in the church business. We're in the Jesus business. Our total security comes from Him. In Him we have already passed through death to eternal life. Therefore, nothing in this world has the power to hurt or destroy us ultimately. Our calling in Cursillo is to help people see how this is true in their lives, how it is working itself out in their daily experience. Cursillo can be a place where people discover the only true security in life.

4) Nature

John 14:9. Jesus says "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father". In John 10:30 He says "The Father and I are one". People hunger to be connected to the natural world around them. They want to be grounded in a world more real than the urban life of human artifacts. They want to be a part of something that is greater than themselves, greater than human creation. They want to touch the divine. When people have this spiritual hunger for nature, we can go them one better. We can introduce them to the Creator. God the Father created nature through the agency of the Son, Jesus Christ.

We do not bring God to anyone. God is already present, working in everyone's life. Our calling is to help people understand this and claim it. We are called to help people strengthen and deepen their relationship with Jesus. Through this stronger relationship with the Creator, they will gain the deeper appreciation of and connection to nature.

Our calling is not to talk about these spiritual hungers or to tell people that they need to do something about them. Our calling is to feed the hungry. It is said that in a good sermon, you do not talk to the people about love - you love them. You do not talk about hope - you give them hope. You do not talk about faith - you strengthen their faith. How much more true is that for us in the Cursillo movement at this time? Let us not talk about the need for rest, community, security and connection to the Creator. Let us give it to people.

I have said above how important it is for us to speak to our target audience in a vocabulary that is instantly understood. At no time have I suggested, nor will I suggest, that we change the Gospel message. It is timeless. But I am suggesting that we present the Gospel in a way that directly connects to what is going on in people's lives. I took some time to explain to you what we mean when we use the words 'Sin' and 'sins'. But I didn't have to explain to you about rest, community, security, and nature. You immediately knew exactly what I meant. You probably know very few people who lie awake late into the night worrying about the power of Sin. But most of you know many people who hunger, are starving, for rest, community, security, and nature. If Cursillo has a future in this diocese, it will be because we know peoples deepest spiritual hunger, the healing Word to speak to them, and what to give them.

At our best, when everything was working well, Cursillo did indeed feed these four spiritual hungers. In whatever aspects of Cursillo people participated in, they did indeed receive rest, community, security, and closeness to the Creator. They finished these

activities energized, excited, and looking forward to living out the next steps of their spiritual journey.

Organizations come into being because of the vision by their founders. This vision gives them energy, which is the first step of the life and death cycle of any organization. Energy is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Follow the energy and you are following the Holy Spirit. I am suggesting to you that the key to moving forward is vision. Our first step is to reconnect with the vision of the founders of Cursillo.

ACTION STEPS

I have taken a number of pages to analyze our present problems and suggest goals for us to strive toward. It is vital for us to know where we have come from and where we're going. Now I would like to offer some suggestions for how to incarnate, put flesh and blood, onto what I have said. Our core problem is that we are out of touch. The solution is to reconnect.

1) Reconnect with God

How often when we have a crisis in life, illness, job loss, family issues, we try to help solve it and then say, "Now that I have done everything humanly possible, there's nothing left but to pray." Wrong! Prayer is not the last thing we are to do. It is the first. And so, although it might seem obvious for us to be talking about it, the first thing we should do is prayer.

- + We could write a prayer for Cursillo renewal. We could pray it at the Secretariat, reunion groups, Ultreyas, renewal weekends, at home, everywhere.

- + We could listen to God. We could take time individually and as groups to be silent and let God speak to us.

- + We could share with one another what we hear God say.

- + We could do palanca for one another. We don't have to limit palanca to candidate weekends. As part of our renewal, we will be inviting people to join us in ministry. We could do palanca for them. For example, when someone goes to speak to a parish, that would be an occasion for palanca.

2) Reconnect with the Cursillo community

On paper Massachusetts Episcopal Cursillo looks like a well organized ministry. The list of people who have attended weekends and hold leadership positions is impressive. But how much substance is there to all of this? How much commitment to Cursillo is there, really? How much are the leaders really doing? Are our internal lines of communication really working? What are the channels of accountability? I suggest that part of the reason that Cursillo is drifting is that we are not in touch with one another. We do not have accurate, up-to-date information about what is happening in all parts of the Cursillo community.

- + We could reorganize the Secretariat so it is composed of a Lay Director, Assistant Lay Director, Secretary, Treasurer, Registrar, Clergy Spiritual Director and four members,

two each from the North Shore, MetroWest, South Shore, and the Cape & Islands. This will give us needed geographic diversity and help open up the lines of communication.

+ We could stop telling people that we have a lot of jobs that need to be filled so the work of the organization can go on. We could tell people that there are now new opportunities for ministry available to continue the mission our Lord began and ask them to consider prayerfully how God is calling them to respond. We could remind them that God never calls us to failures and that God always provides us with all the resources we need for success.

+ We could make accurate, up-to-date, lists of

- all weekend attendees
- all the active reunion groups
- all the active Ultreyas
- all of parish coordinators who are actually doing this ministry
- all the parishes who have had many members involved in Cursillo in the past and who would benefit from renewal
- all persons who have held leadership positions in the past and might be open to being reactivated

+ We could get two more people each from the North Shore, MetroWest, South Shore and Cape and Islands to be regional coordinators. They could revitalize the ministries of the parish coordinators, recruiting new ones as needed, and help them as they support their fellow parishioner's in forming, joining, and attending reunion groups and Ulytreys. They would, of course, have the acquiescence, if not the consent, of the relevant rectors before doing this. There would be appropriate training for these people.

3) Reconnect with Our Vision

Without a vision the people perish. Vision is vital for renewal. The founding vision for Cursillo has inspired people for over 60 years. Now is a time when we can rediscover that vision, talk about it in clear, simple language, and reconnect with our own roots through which our Lord nourishes us.

+ We could put candidate weekends on hold for the time being. The time and emotional and spiritual energy that this releases could be invested in other activities that have a better chance of success.

+ We could have 4 renewal weekends per year; one each in North Shore, MetroWest, South Shore and the Cape & Islands. We could put more effort into inviting people to attend the Day of Deeper Understanding as a 4th Day activity, and supporting those who lead the DDU.

+ When we restart the candidate weekends, we could put the emphasis back on making the weekend a time to prepare people to live their Fourth Day. When we sponsor candidates for a weekend, we could make it clear to them that Cursillo is ultimately about the Fourth Day.

+ We could send the Tripod out monthly with the emphasis on feeding people's spiritual hungers and only lightly touching on organizational matters.

- + We could revise our website with the emphasis again being on supporting people in living their 4th Day and our feeding their spiritual hungers.
- + We could make greater use of our presence on Facebook.
- + We could maximize person to person, face-to-face, contact at all levels of Cursillo, and remember that although electronic communication has an important role to play, it is a supplement to and not a substitute for, a reinforcement of and not a replacement for, face-to-face contact.

4) Reconnect with the Rectors

The absence of clergy involvement, especially Rectors, is a major gap in the life of Cursillo. Addressing it will be a significant forward step.

- + We could get an additional two people each from North Shore, MetroWest, South Shore and the Cape and Islands to go as teams of two to visit the Rectors in their area. They would be trained before making their visits. The goal would be to visit every rector. We will settle for whoever lets us in the front door.
- + We could listen very carefully to what they have to say about Cursillo so that we can gain accurate information about our public image among the clergy.
- + Our two-person visitor teams could come prepared with a clearly understood goal of what they want to accomplish in the meeting and with written out talking points in hand to guide them through the conversation.
- + Our teams could come to these meetings prepared to:
 - Explain in detail exactly what Cursillo is all about
 - Correct any misunderstandings about Cursillo, especially that we are not a cult, not anti-gay and not anti-justice ministries.
- + Our visitor teams could explicitly ask:
 - Permission to approach the parish about Cursillo, especially those parishes that have a history of involvement with us
 - that the Rector speak well of us to the parish
 - that the Rector consider the idea of maybe someday joining Cursillo
- + Our visitor teams could stay in touch with those Rectors who make a positive response.

These possible action steps which I have presented for your consideration may seem so numerous that they are overwhelming you with despair. How can we possibly do all of this? Where do we even start? Allow me to suggest that all of this is not that complicated or difficult. There is a basic underlying simplicity to all of this.

I am suggesting that we move on four parallel tracks, as numbered above.

- Track 1 is reconnecting with God through prayer, listening, and palanca.
- Track 2 is reconnecting with the Cursillo community through strengthening our communication and accountability.
- Track 3 is reconnecting with our vision through shifting our emphasis from candidate weekends to reunion groups, Ultreyas, DDU and Renewal weekends.
- Track 4 is reconnecting with the Rectors through a series of meetings.

News of the Gospel. Yes, it is time-consuming, scary, and stressful. But we have Jesus' promise that He will be with us every step of the way. With Him at our side, how can we fail?

So when people tell us they are too busy, we have a response we can make. We have an opportunity to do ministry.

HOW TO BEGIN

Again, I do not want the Action Steps I have presented here to seem so overwhelming that they paralyze us. There is a flow, an order that we can adopt, that will make all of this manageable.

Phase One

- 1) Write and begin to use the prayer for Cursillo Renewal
- 2) I commit myself to facilitate a day long meeting with the Secretariat to study this document
- 3) Put this document on the website and encourage comment and conversation on Facebook
- 4) Using our excellent data base, have each member of the Secretariat select 10 formerly active Cursillistas. Phone them and ask them to read this document. If they need a hard copy, mail it to them. Invite their feedback in a subsequent phone call.
- 5) Plan a day long meeting for a wider discussion of this document. Invite everyone on our mailing list to come. Especially phone and invite the people contacted above to attend. I commit myself to help facilitate this meeting.

Phase Two

- 6) Restructure the Secretariat as suggested above. Begin Palanca for all those leading this renewal effort.
- 7) Touch base with those parishes that have a strong history with Cursillo. Are the rectors on board? Are the parish coordinators active?
- 8) Send out more Tripods, by USPS or email, as appropriate.
- 9) Select and train the two lay persons from each region who will support the rectors and parish coordinators in reviving Reunion groups and Ultreyas.
- 10) Revitalize and increase Renewal Weekends and the Day of Deeper Understanding.

Phase Three

- 11) Select and train the lay persons from each region who will visit all the other rectors.
 - 12) Be proactive in visiting parishes to publicize Cursillo. Visit and speak to the Deanery assemblies.
 - 13) Interact with Diocesan Evangelism and Leadership Development ministries.
 - 14) Restart candidate Weekends
- Needless to say, it will probably take several years to accomplish all of this.

CONCLUSION

Cursillo has grown and been strong when it has been lay led, democratic in leadership, and involving a lot of people in doing its various tasks. I have some skills that I am willing to offer. I am good at analyzing, explaining and developing plans. I am glad to have had the chance to present these thoughts to you. And I am willing to continue doing this kind of overview.

There is a need, however, to develop a plan and then invite other people to join in putting that plan into action. Each of us has a contribution to make. Let us join together to make this happen.

As we move forward, let us remember that Cursillo is not an end in itself but only a means to obtaining an even greater goal - feeding people's spiritual hungers. Cursillo is not the only way this can happen. God is at work in the world through other ministries as well. Our calling is to be clear about our goals and flexible about our strategies. In the final analysis success or failure is not in our hands. It is up to God. And that is Good News, for it will help us relax, let go of what we cannot control, and be faithful to our calling.

The beginning and re-beginning of any organization comes from energy. Energy is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Energy comes from:

- + Vision
- + Being true to core principles
- + Person-to-person contact

This is how the Holy Spirit gives us energy. These are the places for us to go to encounter the Holy Spirit. Will you join me going there? Together we can be part of something grand - the "in-breaking" into the world of the Kingdom of God.