

What is our Discernment?

As most of you know, our Cursillo Movement has declared a process of discernment and while we are in discernment, we have suspended holding weekends. This has been a great vexation for some and it certainly is an inconvenience for others who may want to go on a weekend or sponsor a friend to make a Cursillo weekend. Yet, it is necessary.

Over the past 17 years the society we live in has greatly changed. While we have been given many devices and computer applications to help us reach out to other people, our civil and societal communications have grown coarse and we have become a disconnected people. None of this is Cursillo's fault, but Cursillo must swim in these shark infested waters if it is to continue to achieve its goal of having more saints present on Judgment Day.

So why are we in a period of discernment? Again over the last 17 years we have gone from having at least two packed women's weekends and two men's weekends to barely being able to have weekends having only 6 or 8 candidates. Something is wrong with sponsorship, and something is wrong with our spirit of spiritual friendship.

If one looks out at the Ultreyas, one sees once vibrant Ultreyas dying. Forestville will no longer exist shortly because of attendance. Bowie is struggling. Assumption bloomed and died in just a few years. Queen of Peace died because no one would lead it. St. Theresa of Avila for a brief time did not have an Ultreya leader, and while Calvert Ultreya has enjoyed upwards to 30 people coming on good nights, it is not healthy either. Calvert Ultreya serves three parishes, and has upwards of 300 Cursillistas who go to these parishes but most of them do not come to Ultreya. And while we have mentioned only a few of the Ultreyas across our Washington Movement, all of our Ultreyas are finding it hard to replace leaders and to get folks to attend regularly. Something is wrong.

The components of what is supposed to be an alive Cursillo Movement that shines forth as a gem of the diverse communities we come from is still kicking and a great grace. Our period of discernment is a time of prayer and we hope you are praying for the movement. But it also a time for us to seek to tap into the particular spiritual strength behind Cursillo. The gift of the Spirit that is the source of Cursillo's spiritual strength and innovative character is called its *charism*. The specific charism granted to Eduardo Bonnín, the founder of the Cursillo Movement, envisions the vocation of the layperson in the Church is "To Bloom Where They Are Planted," When you look around your parishes, the pews are mostly filled with gray heads. For our parishes to grow and thrive, the Church must speak to the next generation. Like our churches, Our Washington Cursillo Movement is similarly filled with gray heads. As our Movement has grayed up, attendance at 4th Day events, week night Ultreyas and small groups gatherings, night time meetings of Leaders School have become problematic for the older folks who find it difficult to drive at night. While day time events and weekend events are problematic for those who work or who have children. Attendance at 4th Day gatherings, Leader's School, and almost every other Cursillo gathering has been declining. This says something about the vibrancy of our movement.

The components that make up our Secretariat, Leaders School, the Three Day Committee, Precursillo, 4th Day and Communications all need to take a close look at what we are doing and we need your prayer – and we mean effective heartfelt prayer to bring us back to our roots of making more saints present on Judgment Day. All of this is what our discernment period is attempting to address.

† We need your help to take an honest look at what we are doing so that when someone makes a weekend they really get the idea that this is a way of living one's Christian ideal and not a ministry. † We need to take an honest look at what we can do to attract not only gray heads, but younger cursillistas who can carry Cursillo's flag forward in our Church communities as us gray heads disappear. And to form enlivened communities of Cursillistas who look forward to gathering to share in the charism that is Cursillo. † We need to take a good and honest look at why the number of weekends we hold each year have gone down, specifically from the perspective of why we are only able to get 10 or so women and 6 guys as candidates for each weekend in current times.

Back in the 80's and early 90's, we used to hold 6 or 7 men's weekends per year and the same number of women's weekends and each weekend had upwards of 30 candidates. We are lucky today to have 30 people attend any Cursillo event we hold. What has happened to our fervor? What is happening with our commitment to sponsor candidates? Why is there so much low attendance at 4th Day events, weekend openings and closings?

Eduardo Bonnin envisioned the creative collision of people from all walks of life, each owning the same mission – to be the Good News in the environments they live in. This Good News is found in the personal encounter with Jesus Christ, lived out through the formation of spiritual friendships whose aim is to help others along the way to heaven. The beauty of the collision of peoples in our Cursillo Movement is the diversity of spiritual friends who willingly come to celebrate the joy that living the Cursillo Method brings, but that only happens when people willingly gather together in love. The charism of Cursillo is experienced, and to experience it you must join with other Cursillistas so as to empower your walk out into the desert that is modern life. Each of us sensed the love and friendship of the loving community that invited us to join in living the Christian ideal using the Cursillo Method. So we are praying you will commit some time to join us for our discernment workshops to weigh in concerning what you think we can do to define our communal issues more clearly and talk about solutions. The Workshops are scheduled as follows:

DISCERNMENT WORKSHOP I: Saturday, March 17, 2018
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., St. Andrew the Apostle Church, Silver Spring, MD
Topics: Pre-Cursillo & Fourth Day

DISCERNMENT WORKSHOP II, Saturday, April 14, 2018
9:00 a.m. – 4 p. m., Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, Washington, DC
Topics: Three Day & School of Leaders

It is very important that we get a good number of our Cursillistas to come to these workshops because we need a lot of input to get the Holy Spirit's Grace Train here in Washington back on track. If you value the gift of community that Cursillo is and the way in which it has enlivened your ability to live the Christian ideal, then we pray you will come to both of these workshops to help us enliven our movement by finding ways to increase our openness to the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

All God's Love and Blessings

The Secretariat for the Archdiocese of Washington Cursillo Movement