

# Second Touch Weekend

1<sup>st</sup> Rollo – Friday, January 26, 2018 at 8:15 pm

## The Essence of Cursillo

Deacon Greg Moran

Essence is what something *is*.

It's that intrinsic quality of something that determines its nature and character, without which, it would not *exist* or be what it *is*...

Plain and simple - the essence of Cursillo is *exactly* what the Essence of Christianity is – **Jesus Christ**, our Lord and Saviour!

SO, WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF THE ESSENCE OF BEING A **CHRISTIAN**?

### *Its knowing that:*

1. God was made *present* in history through the Incarnation of His Son Jesus – Emmanuel; and that He *is*.
2. Jesus Christ is the head of and the *very essence* of the *church* He founded.
3. Jesus *redeems* us and *remains* with us *in* His church and is *present* and real *for* us in His true presence in the *Eucharist* and in us through the Holy Spirit and His abundant grace.

But *knowing* is only the first step – the essence of being Christian is truly *living* it!

It's *living all* of these realities that fills us with the Essence of Christianity; It signifies us as committed followers of Jesus Christ Who *lives* in us through our baptism, and Who nourishes us through His Word and Sacrament.

One step deeper - What is absolutely *fundamental* and *essential* to our being Christian and *living* our Christianity is that **we love** God and we **love our neighbour**.

The *essence* of each one of us, as individuals, is what makes each of us unique; It's what *separates* us from other human beings on this earth.

Similarly, Cursillo also has its **own essence**. It has Jesus as its nucleus and its own set of internal set of characteristics, which causes it to be **what it is**, and which **keeps** it being what it **is**.

The Cursillo movement is **living** and **dynamic**, and as such, is subject to change, but none of these changes will ever **affect its essence**.

The essence of Cursillo is best defined in our manual:

*“The Cursillo Movement is a movement of the Church, which, by means of its own method, it makes it possible for people to **live** what is fundamental for being a Christian, and to **live** it together.*

*Cursillo helps people **discover** and **fulfill** the potential of their personal vocations, and it **facilitates** and **promotes** the creation of core groups of Christians who choose to **leaven** their environments with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”*

That’s a lot to say, but I think this description keeps in clear focus the **what**, (the essence), the **why** and the **how** (or the purpose and the method) of Cursillo.

First, Cursillo is a movement born when people **united** themselves into groups for the purpose of **living** our Christian lives in a way that is consistent with our encounter with Christ,

**In this way, we can:**

1. Make that encounter go deeper in our daily existence
2. Influence other people to join us in this transformative experience.

In the origin of any movement like this, there is always a special grace, which is bestowed by God on the Church. God makes use of historical situations in the Church, in society, or in response to certain urgent human needs.

Today we are witnessing a strong flourishing of other lay movements within the church.

They are a clear sign of the active presence of the Holy Spirit.

In the 1940’s, at the inception of the Cursillo movement, its founders set out with a single purpose in mind: **to make a more Christian world by making people more Christian**.

From that core group, the Cursillo movement spread around the world. Hundreds of thousands of people are living their Christian lives and spreading the Gospel through Cursillo.

From that reality, arises a very basic consequence: the Cursillo Movement is not **something**, but **someone**...a lot of **someones**!

It is **not** a thing, but rather, it is an **organized reality**, **alive** and **active**, a human reality constituted by the **gathering** together of men and women who, after having **made** a Cursillo weekend, have freely chosen to **adopt** the **mentality** and **principals** of the Cursillo Movement,

**So as:**

- Not to **default** back to their life **before living** their weekend.
- To have the **ability** and **commitment** to **deepen** their spirituality **using** the methods and **fellowship** they found **attractive** and uplifting during their Cursillo weekend.

To put it another way, the Cursillo Movement consists of men and women who, after having lived a Cursillo weekend, come together to **integrate** and **intensify their response to God**.

We do this by strengthening our continuous encounter with God, ourselves, others and ultimately the world around us.

Listen to what Pope Paul VI said this about the ecclesiology of the Cursillo Movement:

*“We know that in your field of spirituality and apostolic activity in the Cursillo Movement the sense of the Church is the North Star that guides you, the lever that moves you, the light that inspires you, the wellspring that vitalizes you.*

*From this visit to Rome, the reigning Church which presides in charity, take with you a love for the Church that is even greater, if possible, than the love that already consumes you – take with you a definite intention to build the Church.”*

Years later, Pope John Paul II expanded on this and added that the **essence** of Cursillo’s ecclesiology perfectly matches the Church’s ecclesiology in five major areas:

1. The primacy given to the **calling** of every Christian to **holiness**.
2. The responsibility of **professing** our Catholic faith.
3. The witness of a **solid** and **heartfelt communion** in filial relationship with the Church - Pope and the bishops.
4. Conformity to and participation in the **apostolic purpose** of the Church
5. The **commitment of “presence”** in our human society which places itself at the services of the dignity of the entire person.

In other words, both popes agree that the **method** of the Cursillo Movement is nothing more than the practical **application** of its **very essence**.

However, the Cursillo method must be **applied** and **lived** to stay true to its **essence**...

As a movement of the Church, Cursillo shares the same purpose as the Church herself.

And the Church, as Pope Paul VI told us, exists to evangelize.

However, since we can never **offer what we don't have**, **the primary, immediate** and **essential purpose** is the **interior changing**, or **conversion**, of **each individual** person/Cursillista and **then** of all people whom we touch.

This is a key **distinction** that **needs** to be made – most of **us** would **say** that the **essential purpose** of Cursillo is to **evangelize**.

- But before we can begin to **share** the Good News ... **we must first put in the work necessary ourselves to become the Good News!**
- We must remember that the **first person on the list to evangelize should always be ourselves**.

We cannot seek to **attract/evangelize/convert** others if we are **not** constantly working on our own **continuous conversion to holiness**, and then, in a natural way, **our actions** will **become** **genuinely** and **visibly evangelical** within the context/framework our everyday lives in front of our

families, friends, workplace, and any social settings. This will provide for a more **authentic**, **continuous** and **progressive Christianity**.

This is **particularly** important today.

Contemporary people, for many reasons, are having a **special difficulty** in **accepting** the Gospel. This is mainly due to the many **obstacles** encountered in today's society:

- Secularism
- Relativism
- Consumerism
- The **deification** of technology and science
- And the **exaltation** of human beings to the point of some people making themselves god-like beings themselves.

All of these problems more than justify the call for an **authentic evangelization** that is **new** in its zeal, in its method, and in its expression.

It's as if God called Eduardo Bonin to give us the gift of Cursillo to battle the conflicts and problems that plague today's society. Therefore, in light of what both Pope Paul IV and Pope John Paul II comments, the definition of the Cursillo Movement's **purpose** is very similar to our understanding of its **essence**.

Let me suggest that it covers **four different aspects** that, in turn, further explain its purpose.

They are:

1. Facilitating a person's ability to live and share what is fundamental to being a Christian in one's everyday life.
2. To assist one in discovering and fulfilling one's true vocation.
3. Fostering the creation of core groups of new followers of Jesus – new Christians.
4. Leavening one's environments by living the Gospel.

What is unique here is that each of these **four aspects implies the other three**, and each one **compliments** the others in such a way that their separation is possible only from a theoretical point of view – **never** in everyday life.

Let's take a closer look at these four aspects of the essence of the Cursillo Movement.

### ***Living what is fundamental for being a Christian***

When the Cursillo Movement proclaims the message of salvation, it has no intention of creating theology, or forming theologians, or of establishing systems of morality.

Its intention is simply **living** the experience of what is fundamental to being a Christian. This is why Cursillo has been and will continue to be one of the most effective ways to introduce or re-introduce someone to Christ.

Notice the language - Cursillo doesn't simply seek to **teach a person about** Christ; It seeks to **introduce** him/her to Christ.

I think there's a distinct and **profound difference** in these two approaches.

That's why we refer to the experience of **Metanoia**, the spiritual and behavioural **transformation** from one's **head** to one's **heart** that guides the manner in which **we choose to live**.

This process, of **experiencing** God in such holy, holistic and human way, is so deeply personal that we **incorporate** this experience into the **very core of our personality, intellect, emotional storehouse and soul**.

This ontological consequence, in which one's **intelligence, heart, spirit** and **sensibilities** take part almost simultaneously, is an **inexplicable phenomenon**; the only way we can truly come to "**understand**" it at all is when we **experience** it **personally** for **ourselves**.

Here's an example - how many of us have tried to explain the Cursillo weekend to someone, **and our words, can't even come close** - finally we say, "**You just need to experience it.**" It's too hard to explain the encounter you had with your Creator/Saviour!

What is essential and fundamental is ***Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God.***

The **essence** of the Cursillo movement seeks to help one, as St Paul says, “***put on Christ***” to the point of ***living*** out His Kingdom, here and now, through the decisions and actions of our everyday lives; we willingly submit to consciously placing our emphasis on these great truths:

- Christ
- His Grace
- Faith/Trust in Him
- His Church
- His Sacraments

The second aspect I mentioned is to ***help one discover and fulfill their own vocation.*** It has three dimensions which Cursillo attempts to seed, foster and develop into maturity.

- ***One’s human vocation-*** Becoming fulfilled as the human being the Father always intended us to be.
- ***One’s Christian vocation-*** Living out one’s baptism as priest, prophet and king in communion with God throughout our lives.
- ***One’s specific Christian vocation-*** Finding our specific niche – our personalized mission and purpose as called by God.

***Cursillo has helped so many to help so many people:***

- Discover their true vocations
- By fortifying others in their own
- By providing a constant source of inspiration and a greater realization of what life must be to live a life that is fully Christian.

The **essence** of Cursillo is to help integrate all of these into a well-balanced, fruitful life of living God’s Word.

***I also mentioned, Facilitating the creation of Core Groups of Christians.***

Cursillo creates and makes possible the existence of small groups.

Within these groups, there is **ongoing growth**, shared/mutual understanding and acceptance.

Together, through the interaction of these small groups, we attempt to **live** and **radiate** our faith in Christ.

The Cusillistas within each group **discover** and responsibly take their place in the world as **true disciples** of Christ and as a member of the Church.

These core groups are critical to the Cursillo Movement, since Christianity can be defined as “the group of Christians who **live** grace in such a conscious, growing and **shared** way that they, indeed, **leaven their environments** with the gospel.

This task is accomplished through the personal action of each Cursillista individually, either by working person to person or by working on **structures in which one lives**.

But one thing must remain clear. The Cursillo Movement, like the Church, knows that the primary target of evangelization is **people**.

The **essence** of Cursillo was a **gift** from God, given to the Church at a specific time in history for a specific reason. It was given in **response** to a need to **re-Christianize the world** and this need **still** exists today, maybe more **now than ever before**.

The real essence of Cursillo is **Truth** and **Life**.

The truth is the **Word** of God and **Life** is....the **essence** of Cursillo, the **essence** of Christianity – the life is **Jesus Christ Himself** – for He is the **Way**, the **Truth** and the **Life**.

I was talking with one of the candidates at the last men’s Cursillo weekend, and he was lamenting about all of the problems in society and the world today.

He asked; “What can we do to help solve these problems?”

**The obvious answer is Cursillo.**

Can you just imagine, if everyone just **lived a Cursillo weekend** and truly embraced its vision and lived according to its mentality, its method, its strategy, its purpose and its essence.

Our parishes, our diocese, our country and the world would be a much better place. Part of the problem is that, although much about Cursillo is imparted to the candidates in those three days, the true **meaning and depth** of the movement is only touched upon.

To truly get Cursillo to grow and flourish in our diocese and ultimately the world, **we** must **actively work at it**.

So, how can we accomplish this?

The answer starts in the tripod.

First, our piety; we **pray** for the movement every day.

Secondly, **Study**; we learn all we can about our faith and be **ready to share it - always**.

Make it a point to come to the **School of Leaders** every month. Here's an incredible way to fulfill our Study and to learn more about our faith. There have been some brilliant speakers this year who have addressed some fascinating topics in such fascinating depth.

**Action**; actively share your experience by **teaching** others about the movement and its essence and its mentality.

Finally, let me to conclude with a question we can all reflect on this weekend:

“What can each one of us do differently to actively advance the Cursillo Movement so that it doesn't just remain the best kept secret in the Catholic Church.”

***May the name of Jesus be praised and blessed forever and ever. Amen!***