

Our Founder's Legacy: Step by Step

By Sis. Gigi Enriquez

I was asked to write this article by the Mariposa co-editor to get some personal insight on the Step by Step (SBS) that our community is studying to implement.

I was anxious because I know SBS is not very popular with some. But I am reminded to forgo what is popular and just speak from what I know, and from my heart.

I lived my Cursillo in August 1996 at St. Anthony Claret Retreat Center and I belong to the Decuria of St. Claire.

We are all familiar with our “jump”! This is one of the first things we learn at our Cursillo weekend and one of the things that has remained the same. It has been a long time since 1996, and if you are like me, you have experienced numerous changes in *our* Cursillo movement. Many new Cursillistas may not even know what the “agape” is or have walked thru the rosary path in a darkened hallway or woken up for a dawn mananita to be serenaded by cheerful very awake community of cursillistas.

If you ask old timers like me how they like the changes...some will say, it's ok, or you might get stories of how they loved their weekend and that it is not the same anymore. *And they are right, it is not the same. What remains the same however is our love of God and the desire to bring God's love to others.*

I must admit, even though I have served numerous weekends, I did not really understand Cursillo until I attended the workshops given by the National Cursillo. First it was the Leaders Workshop, then Cursillo De Cursillo (CDC) then the Step by Step (SBS). Little by little Cursillo started to make more sense. But there is still so much information to learn. I will not forget when we asked Bro Cef Aguillon, our National English Coordinator where to begin – he said get to know our founder (Eduardo Bonnín), know the history, know his mentality, understand the Charism of the Cursillo movement. For me, this meant – reading, learning, and understanding the many books written by Bonnín.

Why Eduardo Bonnin? It is because it is to Eduardo that the Holy Spirit gave the charism of the Cursillo. Understanding Cursillo as given by the Holy Spirit meant understanding Eduardo Bonnin and his mentality. In the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements, the importance of the founder's life is emphasized. *"In communicating a movement's charism, its founder has an irreplaceable role"*¹.

Many have said that Bonnin's books are hard to read let alone understand. This is not far away from the truth! I had to read, reread, and read again many of his books. It could be because some things are difficult to translate from Spanish to English. Bro Cef said begin with the history of Cursillo. That turned out to be the easiest read. I was intrigued by Bonnin's story. How he was born to a well to do family, led a sheltered life – then all of that changed when he joined the military service and met different types of people. He was intrigued by people he called "the far aways" – people who do not know God or far away from God. Inspired by the Holy Spirit and by the Pope's call to bring people closer to God – Bonnin started the Cursillos in Christianity Movement.

I am humbled by the fact that Cursillo is not a result of spontaneity but of careful study and prayers. What I loved about Bonnin is his genuine concern for people and his mission to make known that God loves each one of us. The Rollo on "Study of Environment" was a result of trying to understand "the person" so we can better help them get closer to God. This is the good news that I want for my family, my friends, for myself, and for all.

I have always asked the usual questions -Who, What, When, Why. **What is SBS? Who started Step by Step?** For those who are not familiar with SBS, it is the original way the Three-Day weekend was conducted and started by Eduardo Bonnin in Majorca, Spain. *"It is important to know that the SBS are not changes, they are what has always been the Mentality, Essence, Purpose and Method of Cursillo for which Eduardo Bonnin prayed, studied, worked and prayed again. The SBS consists of the Schedule of the Three Days and 16 Appendices that clarify and deepen understanding of all that is pertinent to the Three Day Cursillo."*² My next questions are **"Why study? Why adapt the SBS?** During his travels, Eduardo *"realized that the Charism that he had received was being lost to adaptations,*

additions, deletions and due to a lack of understanding of the mentality and method that flows from the Charism.” ² If we are to remain true to the Charism, we need to study and learn its mentality and method. By adapting the SBS, we would be returning to the original way the Three-Day weekend is conducted and therefore remaining true to the Charism given by the Holy Spirit. *“At the weekend, if everything is done as it should be, in the end everyone is truthful (to the Charism)”*³.

I have realized change from what we are used to is difficult. It is understandable to be anxious because we normally prefer the familiar. In addition, we have good memories of past 3-day weekends. We also have worked very hard on our 3-day preparations and have been doing things like clockwork.

There are many “why” questions in the Step by Step and the answers are available. I was challenged to seek answers in order to accept and embrace SBS as the way to bring others to Christ. Praying for understanding and the humility to accept helped me see the beauty of the SBS.

I am now beginning to learn that the simplicity of the Step by Step allows for everyone – people of different ages, generation, culture to encounter and experience God in the Three-Day Weekend. The Step by Step truly transcends time, age, and culture! Its simplicity allows for people to be more at ease, to be themselves to encounter God more freely.

Our community is not unique. Other Cursillo movements in different dioceses and regions are also experiencing the same challenges and apprehensions. It is encouraging however to learn that our Cursillo brothers and sisters in Canada have implemented the SBS with great success!

Our community may have a long way to go before we can implement the SBS. I am grateful to our dedicated brothers and sisters who are diligently studying the SBS for us. I have faith that our love for God, for each other and for our community will help us thru these challenges. .

The Holy Spirit gave the Charism of the Cursillo to Eduardo Bonnín. We have received this gift of Charism thru him. It is his legacy which he entrusted to our care. I hope and pray that we continue be good stewards of this gift...to embrace, to protect and to cherish.

May God continue to bless our community and give us the grace to follow His Will.

De Colores!

"I encourage you to 'keep pressing forward', faithful to your charism!" - Pope Francis

(ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE COURSE OF FORMATION OF THE CURSILLOS DE CRISTIANDAD MOVEMENT, 30 April 2015)

1 *The Ecclesial Movements in the Pastoral Concern of the Bishops, Vatican City 2000*

2 *My Spiritual Testament, The Legacy Continues Through All Cursillistas*

3 *Eduardo Bonnín, My Spiritual Testament*