

HISTORY OF THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

The first stirrings of what later was to become the Cursillo Movement began on the Island of Mallorca during the years of World War II. The Spanish Civil War had ended in 1939 and the years after the Civil War were a time of ferment in the Spanish Church. The idea was born to have a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James at Compostela, the great Spanish pilgrimage center of the Middle Ages. The pilgrimage would be a time for the young men and women of Spain to dedicate themselves in a renewed way to the work of Christ.

The pilgrimage set a tone. The spirit of pilgrimage is a spirit of restlessness, a spirit of dissatisfaction with spiritual luke-warmness, a spirit of moving onward. It is also a spirit of brotherhood -- of the brotherhood among fellow pilgrims who are striving together to reach the goal.

The preparation for the pilgrimage gave rise to efforts of renewal in the different Catholic Action groups in Spain, and among them the branch for young men in the Diocese of Mallorca. As a result of the preparations for the pilgrimage, there was a greater interest in finding an effective way to work apostolically.

The pilgrimage to St. James was in the summer of 1948. Those who first developed the Cursillo Movement worked together as a team from the very first. They worked as a leaders' team that prayed together, shared their Christian lives together, studied together, planned together, acted together, and evaluated what they had done together. Together they set themselves to the task of forming Christian life among the young people of Mallorca. Out of their common efforts something new in the life of the Church was born -- the Cursillo.

The Cursillo is now established in over 900 dioceses, in 45 countries, and on five continents, with the largest concentration in North and South America.

CURSILLO means "short course." Thus, CURSILLIO IN CHRISTIAN-DAD means short courses in Christianity. A favorite expression is DeCOLORES.

DeCOLORES means "of many colors."

Thinking back to the early days in Spain and the people who came to participate in the Movement, you will realize the value of the symbol of the rooster and its beautiful tail feathers. To the Spanish the rooster was symbolic of the rainbow in the Old Testament where God makes a covenant with His People.

Also the Spanish, with much poverty following the war years of World War II, found the rooster a symbol of wealth and prosperity, a status symbol in a rural farm area. Roosters are found wandering the roadways and hillsides all over Spain. And a good rooster and hen give promise of eggs and more chickens to come. Thus the countryman has promise of food and a commodity to sell or trade to provide for his family and community.

The rainbow colors of the tailfeathers have a special and significant meaning to the Christian.

Green denotes new life, growth, and God's beauty of nature that surrounds us. It symbolizes the ordinary times of the Church year.

Blue denotes loyalty, our commitment to God and His people. It also denotes truth and justice and the waters of our Baptism.

Purple denotes our dying and rising again along with the suffering of Jesus Christ.

Yellow and Orange hues denote warmth, light, promise. They remind us of the love of God's Son in our lives, the light of a candle, the rays of the sun, and the changing seasons.

Red denotes celebration, joy and confirmation. It is symbolic of our feast days within, the Church, Christmas Day and Pentecost.

ULTREYA. This Spanish word means “to go forward” or “onward.” The term was given to the Cursillo Movement as the Spanish shepherders called their flocks to move along the rocky trails in southern Spain.

PALANCA means “lever.” Prayer and sacrifice are a lever to bring change and support.

The Cursillo Movement is a member of the International Catholic Organization and is associated with the Pontifical Council for Laity.

Over the years the Cursillo has given birth to many other renewal movements within the Church. Some of these groups are SEARCH, TEC, and the MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER which grew out of the Cursillo in Spain and then later came to the United States. Later KAIROS, a prison ministry, spun out of the Cursillo.

The local Cursillo Movement in the Diocese of Fargo is overseen by the Diocesan Secretariat, with appointment to the Secretariat of laity and religious from throughout the diocese made by the Bishop. Over the Diocesan Secretariat is the Regional Secretariat. We are a part of Region VI, which includes North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and Kansas. In the United States we have the National Secretariat. The U.S. Cursillo Movement has a national Encounter every three years.

As you complete the Three Days of your Cursillo weekend experience, you will become a CURSILLISTA, meaning a person who has experienced a Cursillo.

We hope you enjoy the weekend.

[Click for the Registration Form](#)