



ORGANISMO MUNDIAL DE CURSILLOS DE CRISTIANDAD – MÉXICO 2018-2022
VIII Encuentro Mundial – VIII World Encounter
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Mar del Plata – Argentina
“Con un corazón misionero, siempre en movimiento”
“With a missionary heart, always on the move”

Fourth theme:

A NEW FORM OF SERVICE TO THE MOVEMENT
New wine in new skins

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1. Introduction

I begin this presentation by quoting some criteria established in the MCC frame of reference that is common to all of us – the book “Fundamental Ideas, third edition” (FICM3) – in order to support some concepts I wish to share with you in this VIII World Encounter. Paragraph no. 291 states: “**Among the collective forms of participation in the life of the Church in recent times, the great variety and diversity of the so-called ecclesial movements stand out.**” (Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* no. 29, Saint John Paul II).

The same paragraph no. 291 goes on explaining that: “**The ecclesial movements have been recognized as gifts of the Spirit for the good of the Church, to respond to the needs of the Church and the world in our times, a richness of the Church that the Spirit raises up to evangelize all environments and sectors.**” (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis, no. 29.)

In accordance with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, no. 40 of FICM3 states that: “**The charism of the Cursillo Movement is a grace that the Holy Spirit gives to the Church, shaping a mindset, and prompting an ecclesial movement...**”

We all recognize that in Cursillos the main evangelizing agent is the Holy Spirit – there is no doubt about this. However, FICM3, no. 316 specifies: For the MCC to maintain its validity in the field of the evangelizing mission, “**it requires a human reality, a group of persons who, assuming the mentality, are responsible for the strategic and methodological action necessary for the Movement to reach its own purpose**”.

In other words, it needs the spontaneous, gratuitous, generous collaboration of us, the lay faithful, by means of synodality, listening to the voices and teachings of our pastors and living these teachings in unity and communion. FICM3 no. 301 says that “**Despite the central role of the laity, the Cursillo Movement lives in collaboration and proper assembly of laity and priests, each with their own specific role, each with their function, in close, cordial and friendly union.**”

That is why, in order to have a correct organization, a schedule, a necessary and periodic evaluation of the tasks carried out, it is currently mandatory to examine

with humble sincerity our projects and ways of acting in face of the signs of the times. FICM3 no. 57 says that “***The Cursillo Movement is based on the rich and precious values of its original charism. It has a need to further study in a permanent way to enrich and correct the deficiencies in its application***”

We have begun the reflections of this our VIII World Encounter with the presentation of Msgr. Gabriel Mestre who helped us build a lucid and realistic look, without disguises or pretexts, at the world in which we live, which is a world in constant change. In fact, differently from the past, the comparison between two generations nowadays shows that the differences in all senses are very deep.

In this *epochal change*, more than an *epoch of changes*, we must be prepared to give answers to the questions we, as Catholic Christians, are addressed, in order to fulfil the common mission of the Church, through our function as lay faithful who, in addition, have to put it into practice by means of the specific charism of the MCC: evangelizing the environments as a leaven.

Our reflection has continued with the presentation by Msgr. Faustino Armendáriz, who showed us that these answers must be given in the new way the Church has definitely adopted, that is, synodality. Such answers are awaited by the Holy See in accordance with the new guidance provided to ecclesial movements by a Decree that explains how these movements should be conducted, in terms of their government at the international level.

The third point for our reflection has been presented by Mariloli Negrillo, who has questioned us not only about how to specify such responses from our own charism, but has also motivated us to go further, much further, since the timeless charism of the MCC gives us a mentality, puts before our eyes a strategy, presents us with a method and points out a purpose – all this being a set of tools that allows us to continue seeking to achieve our mission in perfect unity with the responses of the Church today, to the world of today.

Now it is up to me to invite you to reflect on which attitudes we should take to put such answers into practice... *If one pours new wine into old wineskins, the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined. Rather, new wine must be poured into fresh skins.* How should we build the new wineskins that the MCC needs to give the world its answer as an ecclesial movement? What structures should we reform and how to do it?

2. Background

The concern of the current OMCC Executive Committee (OMCC-EC) regarding the need to update and develop the Movement at a global level, forced us to question the effectiveness of the functioning of the structures in accordance with what the 2014 Statute provides.

In this sense, it is worth remembering or point out that the service structures which today serve the Movement were never imposed to us. On the contrary, over time, we created them ourselves in response to the need to adequately organize the exponential growth of the MCC throughout the world.

This reflection led us to analyse the actual representativeness of the MCC at the different levels of our structure. Of course, the key structure is and will always be the Diocesan Secretariats. The DS represent the Cursillistas of a Diocese, which is where the MCC exists, visible and concrete. It is up to the Cursillistas who make up this basic structure to, at a given moment, meet and decide they want to be represented, at the national level, by the National Secretariats which, to be valid, must have the written approval of the episcopal conferences of each country where the MCC exists and develops.

The evolution of the MCC determined that the National Secretariats were grouped according to their characteristics – being from the same continent, the same region, having linguistic affinity – in International Groups.

In fact, until 25 years ago, there were three International Groups, being one of them the one that brought together the English-speaking countries. Forty years ago (1980), in a Latin American Encounter, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, the three International Groups then existing, created the OMCC as an organization that would not only represent the MCC at world level before other religious organizations and the Church itself, but would also be the guarantor of the fidelity of the MCC to its essence.

The very fact of being born, serving and belonging to the Church, demanded official recognition by the Holy Apostolic See. This claim was noted both by the leaders of the MCC and by the Church itself, since the search for this recognition is, generally, the first step taken by any “association of faithful Christians” (this is how the Church calls all groups and movements), and the MCC not only had a “citizenship card” as Paul VI would have said but was already “old” enough to seek it.

Germany assumed the seat of the OMCC on May 30, 1998. Since then the issue of canonical recognition has come up countless times on the part of the Movement and on the part of the then Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL), today the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life (DLFL).

After three years of consulting the International Groups, contracting the necessary service of Italian canon lawyers, and constantly sending documents to Rome, the PCL, in its decree of May 30, 2004, decided to grant the OMCC Canonical Recognition, as a structure for coordination, promotion and dissemination of the experience of the Cursillos in Christianity, in the usual *ad experimentum* form, for five years.

Despite the fact that the *ad experimentum* period would expire in 2009, the then headquarters of the OMCC (USA), requested and obtained from the DLFL an extension for five more years, to continue with the consultations, the debates, the reflections and, of course, agreement on the proposals to modify the 2004 Statute. At the 2013 World Encounter in Australia, the new document was approved, sent to Rome and, by means of a new PCL Decree of December 12, 2014, the Recognition was definitively granted.

The path of the OMCC – from being an “internal” organization of the MCC at the world level to becoming a structure recognized by the Holy See as such – was

neither short nor easy. In fact, from the approval of the Internal Regulations in 1988 to the approval of the *ad experimentum* Statute, it took the OMCC **16 years** to reach consensus among the four International Groups.

If we consider that the Holy See recognizes the year 1949 as the date of the first Cursillo de Cristiandad, and that the official and definitive Canonical Recognition of the OMCC, expressed by the PCL Decree, occurred in 2014, we are talking about a period of **65** years during which the MCC did not seek, in any way, to have a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church.

That was too long a period! Therefore, it is understandable, although not acceptable, that in some parts of the world, even today, eight years after the definitive Recognition, there are leaders who show a tenacious resistance to accept that the MCC is currently under the protection, under the shade – under the umbrella – or under the jurisdiction and direct surveillance of the Holy See, in the person of the DLFV.

3. Proposal of modification in 2021

This situation is not new. It has been dragging on for many years. It was present and manifest when the headquarters of the OMCC was granted to Mexico. It should be noted that we also had the option to “let go” of this matter, avoid conflicts, take things calmly and wait for someone to solve it. However, we decided that it was our duty and responsibility to face the challenge or defiance we had posed, as an essential and imperative task to be carried out if we wanted to recover unity, communion within the Movement, and the Movement’s own identity.

Regarding the fact that today some leaders and Secretariats still resist accepting what has already been decided, it is worth making a very important clarification: this OMCC-EC has never considered or classified them as adversaries or enemies. We have seen them as leaders who defend the criteria that they were taught at their time, because they grew as leaders listening to and learning in their schools the various arguments that circulated in the Movement for 65 years. In short, we see them for what they are: cursillista brothers in Christ Jesus.

The first step we took as the headquarters of the OMCC was to officially introduce ourselves to the Roman Curia to hear their opinions and the comments and expectations that the Holy Father had about the Cursillos in Christianity.

The second step consisted of learning about the reality of the MCC in the world. Therefore, during the first two years of our assignment, we tried and reached the goal of visiting and living with the different National Secretariats that make up each of the four International Groups, in order to accurately locate the problems of each group and have an overview of the situation to be faced.

With a thorough vision of the reality of the Movement worldwide, in the 2nd Ordinary Meeting of the OMCC with the International Groups held in September 2019, in the city of Chicago, USA, we approached the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the MCC faced in each latitude, through a very complete report that, as we stated in that same meeting to those present, we would deliver to the

DLFL in a personal audience that had been granted to us, for that purpose, on December 4, 2019.

I was accompanied to this audience with the DLFL by the Spiritual Advisors of the European and the Latin American Groups – Archbishop José Ángel Saiz Meneses and Fr. Jorge Farfán. Together, we received the necessary guidance to discern the best options for the MCC, which helped us to begin a path of reconciliation, unity, communion and identity as an Ecclesial Movement. We agreed that, though the Statutes were practically new, it needed some absolutely essential modifications.

This is the origin of the proposal for modification promoted by these two International Groups, after consulting their National Secretariats, and supported by this OMCC-EC. The DLFL agreed to allow the modification of the Statute, which should be submitted for approval at the Extraordinary World Encounter, in Mar del Plata, in 2021. However, two International Groups did not share the same opinion and expressed their opposition. Therefore, without consensus and with a tie in the vote, the intervention of the DLFL became necessary. In order to break the impasse, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the DLFL, decided to convene a meeting of the OMCC with the four International Groups last May 2022, in the city of Rome.

4. OMCC meeting in Rome

Basically, the meeting in Rome was a space for dialogue and for reflection on the content and scope of the Decree of Canonical Recognition of the OMCC. Of course, the central theme focused: **a)** the need for a change in regulations that no longer made sense; **b)** the urgency of a new approach to move forward; **c)** the necessity to carry out our evangelizing tasks in a different way; and **d)** the demand of the current times to renew (in age) the cadres of the MCC worldwide. All this resulted in some basic lines for updating our Statutes.

A. Cardinal Kevin Farrell

The initial message from Cardinal Farrell, Prefect of the DLFL, given in Spanish, as well as being precise and exhortatory, was strong. Below I share with you some excerpts from his talk:

- This is, above all, an encounter of prayer so that we may be guided by the Holy Spirit. It is to begin again, within the Church, consciously.
- We are at a time when the Movement could end up in the history books.
- The pope spoke at the Ultreya (National Ultreya of Italy, May 28, Rome) about the synodality. He has been talking a lot about this topic, which is about seeking communion among the Cursillistas, among the pastors, and among one another, building real community among all the Cursillistas of the world. If we don't, we are bound to die as a Movement.
- Little by little, the practice of the faith is dying in Europe. I was born in Ireland and the seminaries were full. In the United States, where I lived in Texas and

then in Washington, all the children in the schools knew the Baltimore catechism. Ireland is now the most secular nation in the world and none of that remains in the United States.

- We have to take a step forward, to go “beyond” in everything we do, and this is the moment to do it. We have to find out how to move forward and progress. We need to forget how things were before and wake up to the reality of the Church and to the reality of this world that is changing. And the essence of these movements has not been successfully replaced by a current one!
- The Pope told me yesterday that he had not seen young people at the Ultreya. Tomorrow the doctor will speak about this (Dr Linda Ghisoni, Undersecretary of the section for the Lay Faithful of the DLFL).
- I call on you to begin a new process so that, before November, you arrive at a new form of government.
- I do not like the current rotation system, which changes and then falls into another unrelated group, I prefer more inclusive governments of the continental type.
- When I went was in Dallas I saw that there were no young people there either.
- We fight over the founder and the reception of the charism, and we do not adapt to the times of today.
- The past is over; and reality is different.
- The priest is no longer the only one with the mission of evangelizing, the lay people are also responsible for leading the Movement.
- What are we going to do with this treasure that is our Movement? Bury it? New systems that are meant for everyone. And, in the government systems, five years maximum in important positions and without repeating (Dr Ghisoni will explain it better later).
- New evangelization implies new methods.
- When things are done the same as always, the results go down.
- Point 4 of the Statutes is a *dead letter*, and we must have courage for the new reality and move forward.
- Life in the Movement must be new. New wine in new wineskins. Jesus and the gospels are the same and He spoke to simple people. Evangelizing and approaching people today (Precursillo) is more difficult and it is not necessary to change the message but rather adapt it.

B. Dr Linda Ghisoni, Undersecretary for the Laity.

In order to teach us the essence of the Decree, Dr Linda Ghisoni gave us very important information. This is an excerpt from her intervention.

On Saturday, the pope said at the Ultreya that our movement does not walk side by side with the Church but is part of the Church.

The General Decree that regulates the mandates in the Movements and Associations (11/6/2021) says that the criteria are not indicative but are necessary for associative vitality.

- From the experience of the 115 movements I have verified that there are different methods, and the object of these criteria is the good practice in governing the movements.
- We have two main criteria:
 - Regulation of government mandates.
 - Representativeness of these governments.
- Under the title ***The associations of the faithful***, a document has been written that concerns the associative realities and in which some minimum guidelines that were born as a result of experience are given.
- The mission is received by all the baptized and the common denominator is ecclesiality and the sequence is *faith, Church and evangelization*. For the present and the future.
- Cardinal Ratzinger, in his day, said that movements and associations are the vital humus of the Church.
- In the first point, in the **duration of the mandates**, the main criterion is renewal, which brings creativity, gives encouragement, effectiveness and develops new forms of evangelization.
- The maximum duration of a mandate will be 5 years and a person can never accumulate more than 10 years in positions of responsibility. After a vacancy of one term, he may occupy another position, always in case of great need in the community, after 2 terms.

At Saturday's Ultreya (National Ultreya of Italy, May 28, 2022) the pope said: *“A bad thing that you must avoid, before it happens – because it seems that it hasn’t happened with you, but I’ll tell you first – is “eternalizing” offices, that is, always keeping the same person in a given role. Please don’t. Everyone is good, but we are not all indispensable. We are not indispensable. I finish this job as coordinator, I don’t know what it’s called over there, either of the group or of the countries or general, and I go home – that is, I go into the groups as an ordinary person, an ordinary person. “No, but I did this, now we need to...”. You don’t need to do anything; you have to let go! Is that clear? And this renewal, to counteract personal ambitions, which are inspired by the devil, is a task in which you must persevere. Because so many movements have died out in the hands of a sole leader. We have much experience of this in the Church. So, renew the service of authority, let us say, renew it: no one is eternal in authority.”*

And it is a task that the Pope asks us to undertake in order to renew ourselves, also internally.

- Unity is not based on the path of a single individual.
- And it is what preserves us from many dangers of **self-referentiality** that tends to marginalize.
- I encourage you to be vigilant so that the charism does not become absolutizing. The centre is not the charism, the centre is only one and it is Jesus Christ. All charisms must be decentred. The centre is the Lord. The responsible one is called to govern the Church and is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- The “democratic” vacuum of government and the abuse of power are the dangers of a government responsibility.
- The logical consequence in positions of responsibility is **alternation**. Knowing how to withdraw is an art for which you have to prepare.
- How you live, we take our leave...
- In February 2018, the *Motu proprio **Learning to take your leave***, which deals with positions in the Church which will always be of service was published.
- They are servants, not masters. Always ready to leave office. The *Motu proprio* speaks, as a special case, of those who might be asked to serve for a longer period, a situation that should not be interpreted as a privilege, but as a result of specific reasons.
- Regarding the second point, that **of representativeness**:
- Free elections will be promoted and prepared. Without conditioning. Without orienting. Without giving directions. What goes against that, is a lack of trust in the Holy Spirit.
- In the elections, synodality is shown in a real and dynamic method that places its trust in the ecclesial search.
- Free and transparent elections are based on truth and freedom.
- An understanding of what it means to govern is needed and will be applied to the election preparation processes not only at the international level but also at the more local level of our communities.
- The two dangers that exist when assuming a service are: the thirst for power and disloyalty.
- Disloyalty is when I want to serve the Lord and other things. It is a double game of serving our ego, seeking recognition and appreciation. It is when we believe

we are essential and, when we leave office, we tell who our successor *should be* and above all, and this is the worst, who *should not*.

C. Cardinal Kevin Farrell

Once again Cardinal Farrell taught us what are the essential points of the necessary renewal.

- There is no Movement outside the Church.
- The DLFL is called to avoid ideologies that are not evangelical.
- I tell you one thing: we would not be here (the DLFL) if there was no danger that the Movement could disappear, even if we do not want to see it.
- There is another Movement in your same situation that may have a worse result.

5. Proposal of modification in 2022

As an actual result of the Rome Meeting, the following decisions were made, the following steps were taken:

- Accept the proposal presented by the GECC, APG, GLCC and with the adhesion of the NACG for a new system of government at word level, with election of candidates for the OMCC (5 members), in addition to a representative of each International Group (9 members in total) elected by the National Secretariats every 4 years, in a World Encounter.
- Create a Commission to Review and update the Statute of the OMCC to the new form of government within 8 weeks, with a deadline of July 28, 2022.
- Upon receiving the proposal to modify the Statutes, the DLFL will discern, decide on the modifications and communicate its opinion to the OMCC-EC within a period of 30 days.
- Upon receiving a favourable answer from the DLFL, the OMCC-EC:
 - Will convene the VIII WE from December 1 to 4, 2022, in Mar del Plata, Argentina, for the approval of the modifications to the Statutes by the NS.
 - Will begin immediately the election process for the new headquarters of the OMCC, in which any NS duly recognized by its Episcopal Conference may participate.
 - Will establish the procedure for this and will communicate it in the first months of 2023.

- Will convene a new WE the last week of May 2023, in Mexico, for the election of the new headquarters of the OMCC.
- A new extension is granted in all OMCC, IG, SN, SD services, until the election of the new headquarters of the OMCC in the WE of Mexico, at the end of May 2023.

CONCLUSION:

The Charism of the MCC is the evangelization of environments. This purpose has been “slowed down” by dealing with the deadly and highly contagious virus of the “resistance”. A lot of time has been wasted and used to attend and debate on issues from the past, without realizing the reality of a rapidly changing world.

Some of the more common causes of “resistance” are fear of the unknown; lack of adequate information or malicious disinformation; historical factors; status threats; threats to experts or power; atmosphere of low organizational trust; fear to fail; refuse to experience; increased responsibilities; fear of not being able to learn the new skills required.

And if we resist... what would the result be?

- a) An aging MCC... An MCC imprisoned by those who resist change... perhaps because it doesn't suit them... or perhaps because they lose their leading role.
- b) *“Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste; and no town or house divided against itself will stand”* (Mt 12,25). This is the fear of the Holy See; therefore we were called to Rome.
- c) *“Is Christ divided?”* (1 Cor 1,13) However, addressing this tension and lack of unity within the Movement has caused us to neglect the purpose of our Charism: the evangelization of environments.

1) *Africa Project.*

- Presence in 8 countries
- South Africa NS
- Ghana in 2019

2) *Eastern Europe expansion.*

- Ukraine 9th Cursillo this year
- Poland 1st Cursillo this year
- Romania
- Belarus?

3) *World Bank of Leaders.*

4) *Relaunch of the MCC worldwide.*

“It is essential to understand the “charismatic dimension” of the Cursillo Movement, by recognizing that in its foundation there is a special gift of the

Spirit, not only a purely human initiative. Therefore, participation in the Cursillo Movement, because it is inspired by the Spirit, means to live inspired by the Spirit, welcoming, understanding and living the charism.” (FICM3, 59)

Questions for the group work:

1. How do we interpret the need for the GCM governance worldwide (OMCC) to have the approval of the Holy See?
2. The DLFL has offered clear and valuable guidelines for the governance and coordination of ecclesial movements. How could we transfer and welcome them in all instances of our Movement? How do we understand the proposal that such a government be made through a structure closer to the bases where the MCC becomes visible and concrete
3. Cardinal Farrell remarked on several occasions that if there is a proposal to modify structures of the MCC, the reason is to encourage the Movement to carry out more and better its evangelizing task in today's world. How can we adapt our structures, all of them, to go further in our evangelizing task?