



Chester Anglican Cursillo

Spring Newsletter 2020



Hello and welcome to the Spring Newsletter, my thanks go to Sue Lewis for producing this. When I look out my window, I find it hard to believe it's nearly Spring, we've had so much rain recently, I've got Noah on speed dial on my phone! Seriously though, my heart goes out to those who have been affected by the flooding and my prayers are with you if you are one of them.

As we prepare for Lent perhaps this weather reminds us that instead of giving up chocolate and sweets this year maybe we should be giving up being wasteful and take up caring for our planet. I sometimes feel the little I can do is insufficient to make a difference but if collectively we did a little wouldn't that soon amount to a lot.....

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Diocesan Ultreya on March 7th and I hope some of you will be at the Wake up & Clausura of weekend 60 at Wistaston Hall. Janette and her team are busily preparing for what will be a wonderful weekend, all we need now are some participants. Have you got someone in mind to sponsor? If you need more information about that please get in touch with Marlene Harper our Weekend Coordinator.

If I don't see you before, I wish you a blessed and joyful Easter.

Ultreya

Carol, Lay Director for Chester



'Tis the season to be jolly!

Well, that may not be how you view the forty days of Lent – jollity may be a bit scarce in the wind-swept month of March and under the customary April showers. But instead of succumbing to doom and gloom, perhaps we could look at this Spring season as a refreshing time in the Church's calendar that offers us a chance to lighten our hearts of some of the burdens we habitually carry around? As a "Wednesday's child", I must admit to sometimes looking on the bleaker side of things, but as each season unfolds, I continue to hold on to the hope that "God is working his purpose out, as year succeeds to year."

Cursillo offers each of us a regular opportunity within the Fourth Day to try and see things afresh from God's perspective. By hearing ourselves speak and being listened to non-judgmentally, we are freed up to look again at our everyday experiences of life and faith, and however "weary and worn and sad" we may feel, to consider cultivating ways of prayer, study and action that will refresh and encourage us along life's way, with all its ups and downs. We pray that we may find a new spring in our steps as we journey on together towards Easter.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk
Till trav'ling days are done."

from Veronica, your Acting Diocesan Spiritual Director



Websites and Newsletters!!!!!!

BACC will be replacing their website next year and are looking for ideas to design and content they want the website to be relevant and meaningful. Steven Ridley says this is a chance to shape the future of Cursillo and stamp your ideas on how we present ourselves to Christians countrywide.

For more information go to the BACC website

www.anglicancursillo.co.uk

The same for this newsletter. We want it to reflect us, Chester Cursillo.

We have put this newsletter together quite quickly because we don't want it to go. It has been very time consuming – there must be a quicker way than the only path I know...copying and pasting. I also cannot believe that this online word will not let you insert text boxes!!!! So, **help!**

What would you like to see in a Chester Cursillo Newsletter?

Would you be willing to support it?

Could you help produce it?

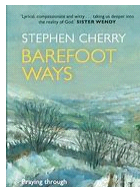
Do you still want a newsletter?

[Email:sueplancx@hotmail.com](mailto:sueplancx@hotmail.com)

Many thanks, Sue.

One for Christmas (but it's only Spring I hear you say....)

A book review by Lew Riches



This is a bit of a cheat really because not only have I not got a copy I've not read it completely, yet. Here's the story then.

I came across it at a remarkable Quiet Day on Saturday 14/12/19 hosted and led by Veronica Hydon. It was in the afternoon session that I went to the books.

Some stood out. The Holy Island images and texts, Sister Wendy's meditation on works of art and lastly, **Barefoot Ways**, possibly because I'm just finishing Kate Humbles book on her walks, Thinking on my Feet.

So Barefoot Ways turned out to be about praying through Advent, Christmas and Candlemas Not about walking. Now I'm not big on churchy things at all and certainly not the church seasons. "They sanitized our folk carols and pagan rituals" is my background.

However when I opened it up I discovered that not only does Stephen Cherry give his explanation of the church seasons, what they stand for and what they mean and how they fit into our current calendar, he also provides a prayer for each day of Advent through Christmas and then to Candlemas. After skimming through his explanation of Advent I thought ...this makes sense and then reread it carefully.

Bear in mind I'm reading this in the midst of a Quiet Day in a beautifully decorated, warm church, with others doing similar calm minded activities and listening to 100 Chill Out Classics, I'm by now very stilled and ready to receive.

After his explanation of Advent, I turned to the particular prayer for the 14th January and, as is my practice, skimmed it and thought this is worth another read, and another and another. At the 7th reading I realised I was praying not just reading. Can't describe the change from reading to praying, yet. Probably something to do with context, their structure, the words themselves and my belief in prayer.....simple, they were and plain and direct.

The book as I've said flows through a narrative on the reason and purpose of the Christian seasons and follows with prayers for each day of that particular part of the season.

It has worked for me. I now feel plugged in to something more spiritual than the church institutions and more alive than the lectionary and more related to the natural spiritual Christian rhythms our lives have followed in the past. I close with Stephen Cherry's own words about the book.

The distance from Advent to Candlemas is considerable, and there are many ways across its fearful and fascinating terrain. I offer here some 'barefoot' ways - by which I mean ways that are both down to earth and yet full of spiritual aspiration and hope."

That nice Mr. Amazon will be sending me a copy soon, Lew

Art and Spirituality

Joan Clare

At the beginning of February, I went on a week's art course in the Lake District. Entitled Art and Spirituality it looked at how artists in the past had tried to convey their feelings and beliefs into their work. [Thomas Merton \[1915 - 1968\]](#) thought that music, art and poetry attuned to the soul of God. Art, he believed connected to the spirituality of the world.

He said, "it enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time. Art is not an end in itself, it introduces the soul to a higher order, which expresses and, in some sense, explains. [No Man is an Island]"

Art comes from the heart and likewise speaks to the heart. Which is why as viewers some artists or pieces 'speak' to us. We can't articulate their appeal, but we are attracted to them and give us a great deal of satisfaction.

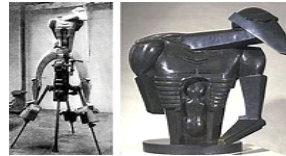
Artists need to be wary however as their work can become spiritually impoverished through fame, status, money, power.

We looked at the [Futurists](#), an Italian movement that flourished at the beginning of the 20th century. They tried through their work to capture all the energy, speed and restlessness of the time. My favourite must be 'Dynamism of a dog on a lead' by Giacomo Balla.



However, this worship of speed culminated to some extent in the power of the machine in WW1.

Jacob Epstein, who had created 'Rock Drill' in 1913, destroyed it in 1915, as a response to the



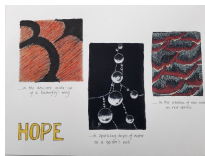
rising casualties of the war.

We need to remember that we still live in a society which is machine fabricated. And that led us on to how art is reflecting society now and where artists thought they saw society in the future. **And that was our brief.** When you look at the two pieces of work 'Despair' and 'Hope', please bear in mind when these pieces were created.... the day after Brexit!

In 'Despair' I felt that most of the population would be living in a 'Blade Runner' type of world; grey, raining, depressing. Only those who had money or power, or both would have access to space, fresh air and water, light and leisure. All things most of us now take for granted. If this situation continued for any length of time, then society flattens out and becomes a 2D world; decadence and aimlessness of the privileged; brutalised drones for the rest of us. Morlocks and Eloi perhaps as in H.G. Wells 'The Time Machine'.



It depressed me so much I had to create 'Hope'. To look at the fine detail of God's creation can only be uplifting and give a sense of wellbeing and a belief in a better future. It worked!



The other part of the course was on how as artists we could portray climate change, but I'll save that for another time. The whole week was inspirational, not just as in a light bulb moment but also by the Spirit. A deeply satisfying week.



Who Am I?

Hello, I am Marlene Harper and I am your new Weekend Co-Ordinator. I took the reigns over from Beth Roberts during weekend #58 at Foxhill. My cursillo took place at Wistaston Hall and was weekend #39. My family and home church is All Saint's here in Crewe.

I am formerly from Cape Town, South Africa, with a son, and it was marriage that brought me to Crewe. Stuart and I celebrate our 21st wedding anniversary this month.

Together with Stuart and two others, we lead a 'Who Let the Dads Out?' group (similar to Mums and Tots but for dads). This takes place on the last Saturday of each month with a bacon buttie for dads whilst mum has two well-deserved free hours. We're into our 6th year and continually pray that we will continue for many more years. For those members on weekend #60 training day on 25th April, you're invited to pop in for a cuppa.

My hobbies are cooking, baking, travelling, hiking and allotmenting (this being our 16th year)! We are 90% self-sufficient and we grow for competitions, homeless charities and local school feeding charities in the area.



I look forward to meeting you all, in the future, through training days, serving on future weekends or National Ultreyas.



The following poem was written by John Hulme, a fellow cursillista from Wirral. John has seen the publication of two poetry books, *Fragments of the Awesome* and *The Wings of Reborn Eagles*.

Golgothan

I could hand you something -
weave the skies into a tapestry fix,

bandaging your wounds
and your world...

retell your story into mine
and iron out the poetry
I once sprinkled over stars.

I could heal you

all the way out of you
and burn all the forests in your soul.

So let them come.
Let them take me.

I could summon all the angels to my aid,
clench the Universe like a fist...
and lose you in the punch.

So here I am,
offering my heart
so the world will see...
who I really am...
how easily I bleed...
how total it is,
this soft place aching at my core -
the one thing this world was never prepared for.

Not from me,
forged in the place beyond all vulnerability...
the place where the Universe cries by choice,
handing out love, forgiveness and new hope from a place of pain...
weaving a story that will break your heart when you hear it,
and look into all the injured parts of your soul,
from the eyes that faded and closed at Golgotha.

As we enter the Lent season:

This is love.

Not that you spoke words of comfort,
walked with the unclean and unloved,
shared wisdom, bread and fish,
brought healing into lives
and challenged the status quo.

This is love

That you spoke the word of God,
walked a painful road to the Cross,
shared living water, bread of life,
brought Salvation to the world
and died for the sake of all.

This is love.

It is a seed

sown in the ground,
which germinates, blossoms, and spreads its sweet perfume.

(faith and worship)

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Check out Foxhill House, Frodsham for their forthcoming events...

www.foxhillchester.co.uk
