

A day filled with enthusiasm and inspiration!

Caroline Johnson, Durham Lay Director, reports on this year's Ultreya GB



Ultreya! What a fabulous Ultreya we had in Rochester at the beginning of September. Rochester is a fabulous little city that had echoes of our own historic Durham; there is a castle, a cathedral, winding streets with lots of cafes, and a fabulous history of kings, Dickens and more recently, a table made out of 5000-year-old oak. I was honestly quite captivated by the place. And that amazing table. Canterbury did a wonderful job of hosting our national Ultreya and the welcome was as warm as the weather. Due to the rail strikes, I think we were down on numbers, but those who were there made up for it with their enthusiasm. The wind picked up at lunch time which made carrying the banners an interesting experience, but it helped carry the sounds of our beautiful singing (!!)

We heard two very different but very inspirational witness talks, and the Bishop of Rochester gave a fantastic sermon about using our talents for action. His enthusiasm was infectious. It made me think back to St Aidan's day and hearing about how he used his talents to meet people where they are. Instead of going by horse, he would walk so that should he come across anyone on the way, he could talk to them about the love of God.

I feel that we as Cursillistas should hopefully feel equipped to meet people where they are. Through prayer, God can give us the courage and the words to say to have an impact on someone's life. Isn't that exciting (and possibly daunting!). Through us, God can achieve anything. So let go and Let God!

Message from our new Spiritual Director, Rev Sharon Guest

WE ARE ALL SOJOURNERS!

I hope that the title of this letter doesn't scare you off of reading it!

We all of us are sojourners - a sojourner is someone who resides temporarily, it's a temporary stay or a brief period of residence. The word comes from the Middle English sojourn and from Old French sojourner.

As a family we are definitely sojourners! Although we have moved fairly frequently I don't just mean the physical act of journeying but also the spiritual journeys we take in pilgrimages. We go to Spring Harvest every year – a journey is undertaken to get there and we also experience a journey within as we listen and learn together.



In September we had the opportunity to journey with Christ in an intentional way by experiencing a Cursillo National Gathering– this is also an inner pilgrimage, not one where we walked miles but rather one where we drew closer to God throughout the day, deepening our spiritual life and journeying with Him.

With me as the National Spiritual Director since May this year we are also at the beginning of an exciting new journey together - none of us has belonged to this team before because it is brand new! This brings great opportunities to seek out what God is doing in a new way in this place at this time and join in with the journey that He calls us on.

My prayer for each one of you and myself, is that while we are here we will do the best we can, for ourselves, for each other and most importantly for God who calls us to be all that we can in Him.

As summer turns to autumn I pray that you may have had a well-earned rest and prayerfully consider what is it that God wants you to do with your time in this place.

Blessings, Sharon

Our President, Beth Roberts issues a challenge!

Finding pilgrims for our Cursillos!



A few years ago we were challenged to invite someone on Cursillo who was half our age and whilst I initially thought that impossible I was shocked to find it was feasible without cradle snatching!. As time has gone on, I hear of so many stories of people who have never heard of Cursillo, even within churches that have apparently active Cursillistas. Which causes me to pause and consider what we are doing wrong? I am not sure that we are doing anything wrong but perhaps we are just not doing enough.

If I find a good novel I will share it with my friends, if I see a cheaper place to buy petrol, I will tell my fellow drivers but probably not so often do I share something that most of us reading this article are interested in and passionate about. For all of us questioning the different challenges facing Cursillo across the country we need to consider what we are each doing to help in our own parish and locality.

I have been interested in the views and comments I have heard in correspondence and meeting so many Cursillistas over the last few months. It appears at least a few dioceses are focusing on improving their programme of sponsorship and questioning whether enough is done both before and after the Cursillo. At a recent Day of Deeper Understanding a discussion arose as to whether, or how, a sponsor's responsibilities might continue, perhaps something that is worthwhile reviewing in each diocese, and we considered this at the recent full council meeting of BACC. The discussion included the encouragement for new Cursillistas to find a spiritual director. Not everyone attending had established their own spiritual companion support so perhaps the article "Journey with a Soul Friend" that was already in preparation for BACC Pages will be helpful. I trust that other reports and articles that follow also provide encouragement and information for readers, and I look forward to receiving other items that you would like to share in the next issue.

The Ultreya GB at Rochester was a blessed occasion well organised and hosted by the Canterbury Cursillistas. As usual I enjoyed the fellowship but also appreciated the bonus of seeing the "Threads of Creation" exhibition. I can recommend the images, workmanship but also poignancy of the descriptions. It, along with the times shared with other Cursillistas provided me with much to consider and think about over the coming weeks. Thank you to all involved in the weekend and those who managed to travel and share with us.

Celebrating Leicester Diocese's 50 Cursillo Weekends



In the Leicester Diocese we now have an additional Spanish word to add to our vocabulary along with *Ultreya* and *Palanca*, namely *Camino* which we in Leicestershire all now know means cake, conversation, celebration and fellowship. Over a period of six weeks over 100 members of the 4th Day community and guests came together at six locations spread across the diocese to reflect and engage.

Some attended several of the events and from a small and somewhat tentative gathering at St Thomas Beckett in Tugby we grew in number week by week and closed proceedings at St Peter & St Paul Great Bowden, my home parish. Over the weeks we engaged with staff and participants from Leicester #1 to Leicester # 50 and thanks to publicity via the Diocesan Newsletter we were joined by Cursillistas now living outside the diocese, who made a special trip to join us. We also remembered Cursillistas who have died, giving thanks and naming those who worked so hard to bring Cursillo to our diocese in 1994.

We renewed friendships, in some cases after many years, and had a “jolly good catch up”.

The Rev. Clive Watts had prepared a liturgy of thanksgiving, which was used at each event, and in which as well as giving thanks for weekends 1 to 50 and all that Cursillo has meant to us as individuals, we also prayed for staff and participants on future Cursillo weekends as we looked to our successors' use of the Cursillo Method.

I would like to say a particular thank you to all our host churches who between them put on a lavish spread and a warm welcome to Cursillistas and their guests, especially those who came to find out about Cursillo. What a fitting way to celebrate 50 Cursillo weekends in the Leicester Diocese!

Adrian Trotter L#1



Journey with a soul friend

It can change your life

writes Rev. Brian Statham

Within a Cursillo Weekend we are introduced to the local Fourth Day Community with whom we continue our journey as we meet for Ultreyas and Group Reunions. But some find it beneficial to seek out a specific person with whom to meet one-to-one occasionally to explore their faith.

Most of us are presumably registered with a doctor whom we may see regularly, occasionally, or in an emergency as appropriate. With Spiritual Direction the pattern is just as variable, and for the same reasons. Our physical health affects how we feel, our work, our sexual life, and our mental ability. Similarly how we are *spiritually* has its impact on every corner of our lives.

Spiritual Direction involves regular meetings with someone of wisdom and experience in our search for God in the world around us and within us. For the Christian, the 'spiritual life' is **all** life – not merely a 'religious corner' set aside for God. Nor is Spiritual Direction just for the 'super religious' or for those who are professionally religious – priests, monks and nuns. **All of us** need guidance in discerning God's action in our lives, and in the lives of those around us.

St Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:28 *Each person is like an organ in a human body; each has a distinctive part to play. We all know that God has appointed people like apostles, prophets, teachers, and those who work miracles. God also calls people to less public roles, such as those who have the ability to give and receive from another person.*

The early Irish Christians used to say that a person without a Soul Friend is like a human body without a head. The Irish phrase for such a spiritual guide is *anam cara* – a phrase which could also be translated as 'spiritual companion'. A Spiritual Director, or Spiritual Companion, seeks to discern with us where we are on our spiritual journey.

Our relationship with God is centred on prayer – our individual relationship with Him. It is a relationship that is shared with – and affected by – our life in the Church: the sacraments we receive, the teaching we absorb, and the Christian fellowship to which we belong. But our relationship with God is worked out, 'earthed' and put to use and to the test, in the whole of our lives.

Whatever else it is about, Spiritual Direction should begin and end with our openness to God in prayer and worship – for this is the basis of everything; it is where God reaches us most intensely. As we open

ourselves to Him we start to see the world through His eyes, and our lives begin to change as God opens the eyes of our mind.

For some, it may be that they need a Spiritual Director who will teach them to pray, or to help with those difficulties in prayer that most, if not all of us experience. Even if we feel we know how to pray, we need to advance, to go deeper, and ensure that our prayer bears fruit. A wise companion on the journey can also discern where we need to be challenged or can see patterns of growth which need to be encouraged, and to see reasons for which we need to give God our thankfulness and praise. On our own, it is easy to miss much that is good and encouraging; and easy to avoid that which needs repentance and challenge.

A Spiritual Director may be a priest or a member of a religious community you know and trust – but many spiritual directors are lay people. Most dioceses have a list of those who have acted as Spiritual Companions and may be able to recommend someone.

To be accompanied on your spiritual journey is a sign of strength and wisdom, not of weakness. You wouldn't go through life without a doctor would you? So

Brother, sister, let me serve you – let me be as Christ to you
We are pilgrims on a journey and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.



**An encounter with God,
An encounter with Yourself,
An encounter with Others**

Prayer Walk on Holy Island

By Victoria Button, Durham Cursillo



There's something very special about Holy Island and even more so when the ramblers are following a guided Prayer Walk with Bible readings, meditation, prayer and silent reflection. Led by the Rev Caroline Friswell who is Spiritual Director of Durham Anglican Cursillo, a group of us met on Saturday 1st July to embark upon a journey across significant parts of the island where particular themes for prayer and meditation went with the aspects of the landscape.

For example, a crossroads with signpost invited us to think about choices we may be facing; the old quarry encouraged us to think about our own foundations as a person and of our life in Christ; and fishing nets and lobster pots gave us an opportunity to reflect on Jesus' call to the disciples to leave their nets to follow him.

The weather was a mix of hot brilliant sunshine, fresh gusty breezes and even moody storm clouds for part of our time there, this only adding the wonder of the place. The flora and fauna of the Island also welcomed us with breathtaking orchids in abundance, an array of grasses and butterflies, countless bird species and the odd seal just off the coast.

Although we spent much of our time as a group each of us had an opportunity to undertake our own personal spiritual journey. At the end of the day, as often is the case with a Cursillo gathering, a few of us stopped to enjoy a meal in the local pub, which was really well prepared and tasty, before leaving the island.



A Christmas Carols Quiz - just for fun



(Answers in the next issue of BACC Pages)

Example: AIAM

Away In A Manger

1	WSWTFBN	
2	AFTROG	
3	JTTW	
4	GRYMG	
5	GKWLO	
6	PTOC	
7	OLTOB	
8	THATI	
9	TVMHABB	
10	UUABIB	
11	WWYAMC	
12	ITBM	

New Website update

Do browse the new website, which is coming to fruition, there is still some material on the old website, but this is being transferred and you will find ongoing changes as the site evolves over the coming months so please check in to see how it develops.

[British Anglican Cursillo® – Cursillo® in Great Britain](http://www.anglicancursillo.org.uk)

Use hyperlink above or search: anglicancursillo.org.uk

Technically speaking,

Moses was the first man with a tablet

downloading from the cloud



Remote Zoom Group Reunions

BACC is occasionally approached by isolated Cursillistas wondering how they can maintain a Group Reunion. Whilst it is possible to invite local friends to join and create a local reunion meeting (and perhaps in time invite them to attend a Cursillo Weekend) it may be appropriate to join with others remotely who meet on Zoom.

If you hold a reunion by Zoom and have capacity for another to join you or are in a similar position and would like to join with others remotely, then Poppy Weston has kindly agreed to initiate the collation of a list with a view of matching people together. Please contact her by email: Walemar@anglicancursillo.org.uk

Books we have enjoyed

At our recent Ultreya GB and in particular a reunion group that I was part of, we mentioned books that we had read or are reading, and I thought it **might be a good idea for us to hear recommendations from cursillistas of books they have read accompanied** by a brief commentary on the book.

Please send any suggestions to laydirector.canterbury.cursillo@gmail.com and a list can be prepared and circulated to all. Let me give you an example:

Answering God by Eugene H. Peterson After a short bible study on some of the psalms in which this book was referred to I purchased a copy -it's a great guide for using the psalms as tools for prayer.

Caroline Brewster – LD Canterbury



Group Reunion – Graced Friendship

Following the official closure of Cursillo in the diocese of Exeter,

Peter Watsham, BACC Area Rep for the Southwest, reports:

“Group Reunion is surely our particular gift to the church. It can never have ‘had its day’. Our vision for the Next Chapter is simple

- Grow Group Reunion across Devon and Cornwall.
- Find and invite people half my age to share their journey with us.
- Keep an eye out for people who the Lord has a Weekend place for – pray, encourage and sponsor them.

That’s our plan for a reinvigorated body of Cursillistas.

This is a plan that might be adopted anywhere in the country, whatever the circumstances, but let us pray for all those in that area particularly.



Diocesan subscriptions to BACC

It was the BACC Secretariats’ recommendation to the Full Council meeting in November that the diocesan subscription is increased next year to £300. This had been the recommendation in 2019 but was postponed due to the effects of Covid on both the BACC requirements and the likely diocesan incomes. Now activities and costs are increasing it is time to return to our original budgeting plans.

It is hoped that all Cursillistas are able to continue to support their local activities and that dioceses will also be able to support the ongoing liaison and support that BACC offers and pleased that this recommendation was agreed.

Save the date...

The biannual Conference will take place at Swanwick Conference Centre
10-12 May 2024.

It is hoped that all diocesan SDs, LDs and BACC reps will be able to attend, particularly for the workshop and AGM on the Saturday. Any spare spaces will be available for other Cursillistas. Look out for more details in the new year.

BACC look forward to seeing you there.

Other BACC dates for your diary:

Diocesan SDs, LDs & BACC reps expected at the full council meetings **(shown in bold)**

- Standing Committee – Sat 24th Feb 2024, (Durham)
- **Conference (with AGM on the Sat) – Fri 10-12th May 2024**
- Standing Committee – Fri 6th Sep 2024, Sheffield
- **Ultreya GB – Sat 7th Sep 2024, Sheffield**
- Standing Committee – Fri 1st Nov 2024 (by Zoom)
- **Full Council meeting – Sat 2nd Nov 2024 (by Zoom)**



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Thank you to all our contributors for this issue.

Deadline for our next issue: 29th March 2024

If there is anything you would like to contribute to the next issue, any thoughts, prayers, study recommendations, action tips or articles from your own diocesan newsletters that you would like to share more widely then please send them (preferably by email) to Beth.

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