

Message from national president Beth Roberts

Group reunions are key to Cursillo method



This will be my final offering for BACC Pages as President. I am thrilled that Helen Taubman was elected in November to take on the role from this year's AGM.

I will save any review of the past 3½ years since I was commissioned for another time but I continue to be encouraged by all the contacts I have

into meeting Cursillistas with their joy and enthusiasm to improve the workings within Cursillo, sometimes in difficult circumstances.

Some dioceses are still suffering from the loss of impetus caused by the period of lockdowns which seems to have taken its toll on encouraging new members many diocesan Group Reunions and Cursillo. This continues to need to be addressed, remember with a prayerful invitation anyone can be invited to join a Group Reunion, whether or not there is a suitable Cursillo available in the calendar. It is the method of Cursillo that we should be driving as it is this that supports us all in living out our Christian faith.

I shall look forward to seeing many of you, or at least representatives of your diocese, at the conference in May when, with workshops and discussions we will focus on many aspects of the overall health of Cursillo and many opportunities to learn and be inspired by initiatives that may be practical for your diocese. The conference bookings are now open to all, see the separate article, do come and support Helen as she starts in her new role.

May I remind everyone to remember to support your local events and secretariat both with your attendance and your prayer. They, and BACC, depend on you.

Ultreya!



NATIONAL CONFERENCE & AGM

CURSILLO - FIFOR ACTION

ARE YOU COMING?

Friday 10th – Sunday 12th May 2024

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Alfreton, Derbyshire. DE55 1AU



The theme of the weekend will be how we develop the health of Cursillo, looking Inwards, Upwards and Outwards. Sessions will include the sharing of best practice and new ideas for each diocese to consider with opportunities to socialize and share with friends old and new. We will be very welcome to come if there is space.

Whilst it is primarily for Diocesan Lay Directors, Spiritual Directors & BACC Reps and all Standing Committee members (all of whom will have priority booking) other Cursillistas will

The full cost is £215 per person.

(This covers accommodation and all meals Friday evening dinner to Sunday lunch)

Saturday Day Visitor £45.00.

(9:30am-5pm Saturday includes lunch and refreshments. Spaces are limited so please reserve early).

BOOKINGS ARE NOW OPEN.

Final bookings by Saturday 13th April. See the website for booking forms.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Easter message from our Spiritual Director

Don't despair when life gets messy!



A few years ago, I read the book 'The Ministry of a Messy House' by

Amanda Robbie with whom I was due to lead a retreat. It's about life as a vicar's wife – equally husband! – in a busy parish, as all parishes are.

What strikes me about this book is that we all have mess in our lives, maybe not in our houses (they may be spotless,) but in our lives each and every one of us has messed up. We have got it wrong and said, done or thought things that we shouldn't have.

However, as Christians we are incredibly blessed to have our messiness taken care of by Jesus Christ, not that we don't have to do something about it ourselves, but we can be assured of being resurrected with Him to eternal life just as He was on that first Easter day. Easter which is known as Eastertide is the period of fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday, therefore allowing plenty of time for celebrations!

For Christians Easter is the single most important holy day of the Christian Church, as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the central event in Christianity. However, in the world that we live in today which has many demands on us and I would say in our busy lives but prefer to say in our very full lives, we too need to have mini resurrections in our spiritual journey.

Maybe it's time for you to consider taking a holy day or holy week away to be with God and rest in him and be assured of the saving grace of Christ. There are of course many ways you can do this and if you would like to discuss it please do contact me; but whatever it is I pray that you be blessed by it and bless others through it. As we seek to be people of the resurrection at this Easter time, people who have been saved from our messiness let us be mindful of this verse from Psalm 62 and verse 1:

*"My soul finds rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from him"*

May we be always ready to declare Christ as saviour and Lord over all in our lives and honour him in all that we do with and in our lives. I pray that you find and make time to have a blessed Holy Day this Eastertide.

Alleluia Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Blessings and prayers – Rev Sharon Guest

Meet our President-elect

Helen Taubman



Since I undertook my Cursillo in 2007 I have been passionate about the Cursillo method. I have served as Lay Director for an extended period, have been Lay Rector twice for St Asaph Cursillo and have served on St Asaph team for four further weekends, in addition to serving on our Secretariat in a variety of roles including training officer and BACC Rep. I have been privileged to serve on team for three other dioceses, which was enlightening and invigorating. I also led a development day for one diocese whose weekend had to be deferred at the last moment. The theme was 'Fourth day first and authentic Cursillo'.

My priorities for Cursillo moving forward, would be to further promote authentic Cursillo and 4th day first. I know that this throws up challenges but is the only way for Cursillo to grow and thrive. I have, over the years, experienced the leadership style of at least five Presidents, all of whom have brought different gifts and skills to lead in a professional and inspiring manner. I have served on BACC where I was additionally part of a team updating the manual.

I feel very frustrated when I hear someone in a Christian arena talking about ways to bring people to God and I want to shout "Cursillo would do that for you!" I talk about the method as often as I have a chance to and believe that we should be marketing ourselves better, which is something I would like to be part of.

In my lay life I founded and am a working MD of an independent, specialist, trauma informed therapeutic foster care agency for significantly abused children. This is my Christian vocation. I have no idea why, 24 plus years ago, God pushed me in this direction, but he did. It hasn't been easy, but I have gained leadership skills, intuition, ability to communicate with people of all ages, communities and backgrounds. I am also an active church member and part of a group of volunteers running a community church and drop-in centre, am an intercessor and reader. I have counselling skills and am used to producing professional reports. Consequently, developing Cursillo and listening to others in order to do this democratically, should be a natural progression.

As an experienced leader, who can lead from behind as well as the front, I have a depth of knowledge of Cursillo. Apart from my Lay Director role I led the team running a successful National Ultreya in 2012. I have been on at least 5 CLW's (it is well known that I love training and exploring the potential of the Cursillo method) at my fifth application I was invited to serve on team. I was Wales and Marches BACC rep as part of the six years served and I also co-led a steering committee under the auspices of the Welsh Bench of Bishops to achieve a borderless Wales, linking in with Swansea and Brecon, St David's, Bangor & St Asaph in order to achieve this.

I am part of two Dioceses supporting Lichfield Diocese in their bid to restart Cursillo and led a start-up open-day there. As St Asaph's training officer, I have led training and meditative events for Cursillo and the church, including Days of Deeper Understanding. I have served on our secretariat almost continuously since 2007 and have worked with other dioceses to hold reflective days together. As you may gather, I am a staunch believer of Cursillo and hope that during my term of office, I may have a positive impact.

I hope that this give a bit more of a picture of who I am.

Helen

ULTREYA!!

Desert Island Discs



Have you ever thought about what your Desert Island Discs would be? If you were a castaway on an island, what music would you want to bring with you? This was the question that popped into my head when I was preparing a witness testimony for my Ultreya group. How/when am I aware of God's love in my life? The answer was simple - music.

Music makes me feel God's love, it fills my soul, it brings me to tears, it makes my heart feel full. I am no singer, I will never grace a choir stall, the car and the kitchen are my sound studios. But it is undeniable how God uses music to touch my life. So, for my Desert Island Discs I offer 3 - liturgical, contemporary Christian and secular.

The Agnus Dei - Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace. When spoken it is rhythmic, chant like. But, to me when it is sung, it is a lullaby. It is a moment of nurturing, a precious time within the service where I feel connected to God and am preparing for the gift of Eucharist. A moment of stillness. It takes my breath away.

My Lighthouse by the Rend Collective. My family first came across this when my son came home singing it from primary school and it is still a family favourite. "Shining in the darkness, you will carry me safe to shore". The image of God as a lighthouse, the light of his love always burning for me and you, no matter how lost, is such a source of comfort. I know that God will and always be shining his light, leading me home. I just have to follow.

Annie's Song by John Denver, This is arguably one of the best love songs ever written. "You fill up my senses like a night in the forest, like the mountains in springtime, like a walk in the rain, like a storm in the desert, like a sleepy blue ocean, you fill up my senses, come fill me again." These words resonate deeply because it is what I feel when I am walking my dogs, that connection with nature and God. In my head I can see, feel, and taste all of God's beautiful creation in those lyrics.

What would your Desert Island Discs be?

Emma Kennedy, Chester Diocese

NEW: A directory of clergy willing to help on Weekends

Since being commissioned as the National Spiritual Director at the AGM IN May 2023 I have been involved in various events.

June 2023 – Coventry Cursillo Weekend at Launde Abbey – this was a wonderful experience meeting other Cursillistas and leading as Spiritual Director on the weekend. This was followed by their welcome back which was also a great joy.

There is a good link between many dioceses with their neighbouring Cursillo community and I pray that continues and will be a blessing to all involved.

I was able to attend the closing service for Durham’s Weekend at Shepherds Dene with my husband Ernie and all 4 BACC officers were present.

On 20 March 2024, I started a new initiative with a clergy directory inviting clergy to come forward if they were willing to serve on weekends in other dioceses – please do contact me if you are clergy and would like to join the directory. Also if you are looking for a priest please do contact me and hopefully we will be able to find you one.

Having attended the standing committees that have happened since then has been a source of encouragement where things are going well but also a time of support offered for those dioceses needing some guidance.

Since Christmas much focus has been on the National AGM which will be within the conference 10-12th May and I know there have been plenty of prayers and discussions gone into this. I hope that all who come along will be encouraged and feel supported.

Please be assured of my prayers for you as we continue to grow the Kingdom through the Cursillo method.

Blessings,

Sharon Guest SD



Cook up a treat!

Durham servant community were generous in providing breakfast and lunch for a recent BACC meeting there. The recipe for the delicious Apricot flapjack which Paddy Gascoigne had made for the meeting is shown below.

Apricot Flapjack recipe

120g / 4 oz of sugar

1 tablespoon of golden syrup

120g / 4 oz of butter

60g / 2 oz of oats

60g / 2 oz of self- raising flour

90g / 3 oz of crushed cornflakes

90g / 3 oz of chopped dried apricots

Melt the butter, sugar and syrup and add chopped apricots. Add the oats, flour and cornflakes. Mix well and bake in a lined greased Swiss roll tin for about 12 minutes at 180/190 degC. Double up recipe for a thicker flapjack.

Answers to the Christmas Carols Quiz posed in the last BACC Pages.

Example: AIAM

Away In A Manger

1	WSWTFBN	Whilst Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night
2	AFTROG	Angels from The Realms Of Glory
3	JTTW	Joy to The World
4	GRYMG	God Rest You Merry Gentlemen
5	GKWLO	Good King Wenceslas Looked Out
6	PTOC	Past Three O'clock
7	OLTOB	O Little Town of Bethlehem
8	THATI	The Holly and The Ivy
9	TVMHABB	The Virgin Mary Had A Baby Boy
10	UUABIB	Unto Us A Boy Is Born
11	WWYAMC	We Wish You A Merry Christmas
12	ITBM	In The Bleak Midwinter

Saints meeting in Group Reunion!

It is reported that a rich man once said to Mother Theresa “I wouldn’t do your job for a million pounds” to which she replied, “neither would I”.

A bishop who visited her said that she made him feel big and small at the same time. Small, challenged, disturbed, even a little shamed, but big as well because she showed what you could become. Isn’t that something that we find when we come together to share in Group Reunion? We are challenged by the prayer, study and action of others but also encouraged to recognise there is something we can do that is within our own grasp.

Saints are people who let the light of Christ shine through them, just as we might look through a window at a beautiful scene which fills us with joy, or see the colours in a stained-glass window lit from beyond; so it is that the light of Christ is seen in the works of the saints around us. True saints demonstrate by their lives the attractiveness of an alternative lifestyle which serves God not self. Saints were and are just ordinary people acting in extraordinary ways.

May we continue to encourage one another in Group Reunion.

Thoughts based on article by Rev Tony Long in the November issue of St Mary’s Parish Magazine



BACC dates for your diary:

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

- Standing Committee – Fri 10th May 2024, Swanick
- **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**
- Standing Committee – Sat 22nd Feb, venue TBC

BACC Vacancy

There is a vacancy on BACC for a Publicity Officer. If you know of anyone who may be interested then please contact the BACC Secretary, Paddy, for the role profile. It appears daunting but may be able to be split between any interested parties.

GOD IS COUNTING ON YOU... AND I ON HIM

And lastly.....



Uncomprehending Pontius Pilate

(An imagined conversation between Pilate and Joseph of Arimathea, when he asked for Jesus' body)

PILATE COMMENTS:

“Joseph, I don’t understand. You’re one of the richest men in the region, have spent a fortune on a tomb ready for yourself and your family, yet you want to give it to that man Jesus!”

JOSEPH REPLIES:

“It’s only for the weekend” !! *(See John Chapt 19 v38)*

Sandy Harris – Blackburn Diocese



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Editor: Beth Roberts

Compiler: Vivien Leeming

Thank you to all our contributors for this issue.

Deadline for our next issue: 27 September 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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Please note new email addresses

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