

OxonFourth



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CURSILLO

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WELCOME TO EDITION TEN OF OXONFOURTH

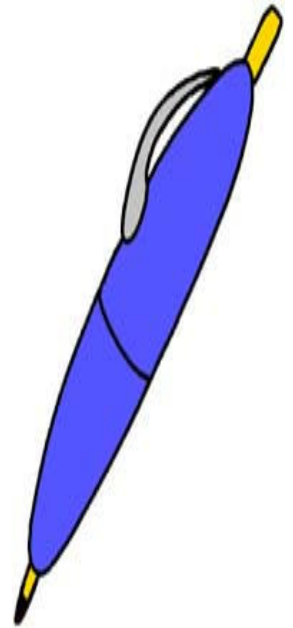
A word from the (temporary!) editor...

Welcome to the tenth edition of OxonFourth, the 4th Day magazine of the Cursillo movement in the Oxford Diocese.

As well as a local Group Reunion, Cursillo provides much more to sustain our walk with Christ, as we share the journey with many others in this worldwide movement and encourage each other with the occasional "Ultreya!"

One of our outstanding vacancies is for a magazine editor. Rather than leave it all to one person, it would be good to have a communications team responsible for all our publications and the website. As with each of the 4 areas of our servant community, one member of each team would be the Representative on the Secretariat, but cannot be expected to do all the work.

Articles and contributions for future editions of OxonFourth will be welcome.... perhaps a reflection on your own Cursillo experience, or maybe a highlight in your life of prayer, study and action. It could be a poem or a book review, or perhaps something which shows how Cursillo supports the life of your church.



K.B.

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARIAT

We are delighted to announce that **Alison Shaw** has been unanimously elected by the Secretariat as **our next Lay Director**. This appointment will begin from the next AGM in October.

We are very grateful to clergy from outside our diocese for making Oxford#6 possible: **Revd Oliver Simon** who has moved to Rugby since serving on our first Oxford weekend back in 2005 and **Revd Barbara Hammond** from Portsmouth who also served as an SA on Oxford#4.

...and so to Future weekends: **Fiona Scott Dawe** is one of Oxford's most experienced team members having served on our 2nd and 4th weekends as a Table Leader and Gofor respectively. She has a real heart for Cursillo in our diocese and we look forward to the benefits of her experience from Coventry as she takes over the cross as **Lay Rector of Oxford#7**. This time the weekend is later in the year to give more time for identifying the guests that God is surely calling, but that process begins now!

A message from the Lay Director Kevin Beer

Firstly, may I express my thanks for the wave of support that carried me through my BAP selection conference in January and for the congratulatory messages in response to the result. I am elated and humbled at the same time and look forward to beginning the Oxford Ministry Course from September.

As you may know, the door to priesthood did not open the first time I “nudged” it in 2005. This temporarily clouded our plans, but St Ignatius’ rule for a time of desolation – i.e. stick to our plans made in a time of consolation – seemed to ring true for Lesley-Anne and me, and so we decided to move nearer the centre of the diocese – a big decision as it meant moving away from family, church and schools. Hence, 2006 saw us move to Abingdon and a sudden freedom from existing responsibilities within the church. Cursillo and especially my group reunion provided a wonderful continuity and a sense of belonging to the much wider church family – across a diocese rather than a parish.

God’s timing was perfect as, in this relative void of parish activity, I found myself ushered without any worthy excuses towards a door that I had never considered: it was marked “Lay Rector” (Oxford #3) and then a little 2 letter prefix was added to make it Lay **D**irector. The deal that was that I would just take it on for one year until someone suitably-qualified would take over. God’s joke on me was that after 12 months of learning on the job, it was then me who was suitably-qualified to finish the normal 3 year term of office!

We are all called to be leaders (Rollo 10) and to take the step of faith involves risks. If you feel unqualified for the task ahead, then you’re in good company: Moses, Isaiah and Peter, to name but a few. So the next time there’s an opportunity for a new initiative in your church, I challenge you to say “Yes, but...” instead of “No, because...” and offer what you are able to contribute. God will do the rest. For example:

“Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”

When we offer ourselves, he will use us for good that He can achieve through us. However, when there’s a “but”, it gives God the opportunity to perform miracles!

“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness”
(2 Corinthians 12:9)

Kevin

P.S. I am thrilled that Alison will be taking over as LD later in the year. Please support her with your prayers and practical help. It will mean that we need a new secretary as well as a new Palanca Secretary – the other hat that Alison is still wearing!

Alison Shaw writes...

When I returned home after my Cursillo weekend I wanted everyone else to experience what I had experienced, for it was a truly life-changing experience for me. Following an article in our Parish magazine and a visit by Kevin Beer to talk at a Benefice Service, one member of the congregation was moved to make her Cursillo. However, despite “talking up” Cursillo at every opportunity in the Parish and Deanery, the challenge to bring Cursillo to my part of Oxfordshire is ongoing.



There are some wonderfully active Cursillo “hot spots” in the Diocese, but there are still large areas of Oxfordshire which do not appear to have heard about Cursillo. I am fortunate to be able to be part of a Re-Union Group which meets not too far away. I was encouraged when reading the BACC resource manual that, while the ideal is that Cursillistas will return to their congregations to exercise their particular ministry with renewed vigour, empowered and nurtured through prayer, study and action following the Cursillo method, “The Servant Community is a serious enterprise, and it is good stewardship to involve people who are truly willing and able to make it a primary commitment”. While I have a pastoral ministry in my community which has been greatly enriched by my involvement in the Cursillo movement, at this time I am very willing and able to make the Secretariat and the Servant Community my primary commitment.

National News

There are lots of dates in the diary - see back cover. The **GB Ultreya** has had rave reviews from Oxford Cursillistas who have made the trip in previous years to Carlisle, Canterbury and Chichester. This year it is hosted by **Ely Diocese** and their **Bishop Anthony Russell** - our former Bishop of Dorchester!

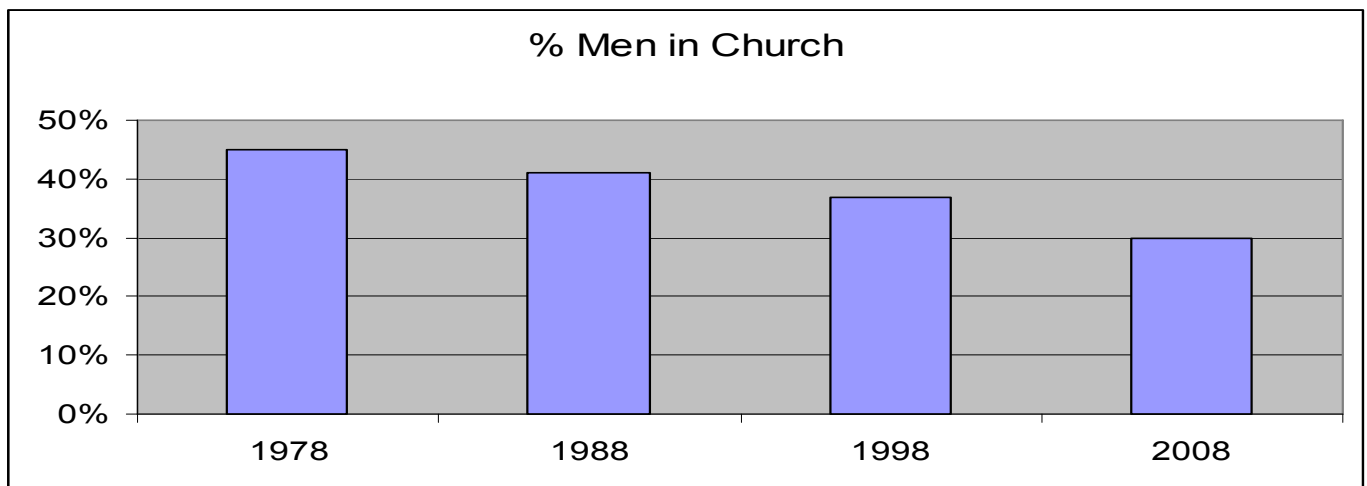
Cursillo Leaders' Workshops (or CLWs) also provide a great opportunity to meet Cursillistas from all over Great Britain and to see how the Cursillo method works in practice in other dioceses at every stage of growth. Although not intended as a reliving of our own weekend, the atmosphere with so many cursillistas needs to be experienced (as well as the food at Offa House, the venue for Coventry weekends).

Please remember our **BACC President Elect, Liz Chester**, in your prayers. Since the election last year, her cancer has returned in an aggressive form. Despite this, she is still hoping to attend the BACC AGM at Kettering on 15-16th May to share her vision for the future of the movement.

Discussion Point – Where are the Men?

We have 8 guests for Oxford#6: 7 women and one ordained man. Of our existing lay membership, we have 43 women and 18 men, half of whom are joint members with their wives. We aim for equal representation of men & woman to staff our weekends, so the lack of men is quite a problem. Our overall proportion of men is 1 in 3 if we include clergy, falling to 3 in 10 among the lay membership.

We could find some comfort in the fact that our makeup is no different to the wider picture because our own membership accurately reflected the national statistics. According to Christian Research: the proportion of men in church is in steepening decline (see graph). This trend is even more extreme when just looking at younger men: in the last 20 years 49% of men under 30 left the church.



Already in our primary schools, the presence and influence of men has become increasingly rare. The steepening decline in men's attendance at church would suggest that our church is heading the same way. Most churches have a budget for junior church but few target men. How do we ensure that there are positive male role models so that teenage boys see a future for themselves in church?

According to Bill Peel in his book, 'What God does when men lead': "Women often seem to gravitate toward the spiritual much easier than men. Male and female tend to instinctively appreciate different aspects of God's character. Women tend to focus on God's nearness, His tenderness and love, and His nurturing nature. Men tend to focus on God's transcendence, His might, His holiness and His glory. Separate any of these attributes from God and you've created another god – not the God of the scriptures."

We need to be mindful of how we portray Cursillo to men, ensuring that the bold, firm, robust teaching and mission challenge that is at the core of our movement is not lost to them amidst the first impressions of butterflies and rainbows. Even real men can appreciate the agape, and the resultant hug of our shared new life within the servant community.

Recommended Study

“Why go to Church? The Drama of the Eucharist” by Timothy Radcliffe

Several cursillistas joined the Archbishop of Canterbury in using this book for study during Lent:

‘It has really made me think about the liturgy and what each part means. The book ends with this wonderful statement: “We gather because Christ gathers usWe gather in our local congregation because we are willing to be gathered into the community of faith....We are gathered as a community of hope....We are gathered into a community of love... This does not mean that we shall be filled with warm feelings for other members of the congregation. Probably not! But it does imply a gradual transformation of who I am, “I and no longer I”, discovering God and myself in the stranger, and God in the core of my being. The slow working of grace will free me to be sent at the end. Why go to church? To be sent from it.” If anyone would like to read it, they are welcome to borrow it.’ (Alison Shaw)

‘Very good. Also read ‘Adam’s Dream’ by Keith Jones. I recommend these.’
(Victoria Mort)

‘I was fascinated by the extended parallels between Adam and Jesus beyond those made by Paul, especially in relation to the Eucharist: in the same way as the rib from Adam’s side gave life to Eve, the blood and water which spilled from Jesus’ side gives life to the church, his bride. I would also recommend Tim Radcliffe’s previous book: What is the point of being a Christian?’ (Kevin Beer)

A new Glossary of Terms

(taken from Adrian Plass’ book: Bacon Sandwiches and Salvation)

• **“And lastly”**: phrase employed by preachers, meaning “Don’t even think about so much as shifting in your chair, we’ve got a long way to go yet.”

• **“Nativity scenes”**: presentations which, in the case of infants, commonly involve such distractions as shepherds throwing up in public, wise men forgetting their lines, and the baby Jesus having to be recast as a wandering star because he keeps getting out of the manger for a little explore around.

• **“Pillar of the church”**: big thick thing that holds up everything and restricts vision.

Easter People in Action

Our monthly Prayer Diary prompts us to pray for each other's ministry in our 4th Day, so it is always good to hear what other cursillistas are up to so that we may pray into their situation. In Oxford, we have:

Martin Henig:

I had an amazing and busy Easter, mainly serving at St Frideswide's, Oxford and St Margaret's, Binsey (which is formally a chapel-of-ease in the parish, but is in fact one of the most important Christian sites in the county). A highspot was being asked to preach at Binsey at evensong at Good Friday, when the mood changes from the despair of the Cross to...something different. I reflected on the selfless (and brave) acts of Joseph of Aramatheia and Nicodemus, placing them in their contemporary Jewish context, and also spoke of the garden and alluding to the very famous Easter homily of St John Chrysostom, ended with Our Lord breaking down the gates of Hades and liberating all creation, animals as well as human beings.

The Vigil and Service of Light in St Mary Magdalen's was marvellous as always, but perhaps for me again the highlight was early next morning at Binsey where the trees, flowers and birdsong echoed the words of the Exultat.

I have continued to try to go to Gloucester on the first Saturday of the month, when the Ecumenical Prayer Group for Animals meets in the Creation Chapel just after noon, and as a member of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics and similar organisations continue to try to encourage Christians to put the care of all Creation, not just human beings, in the centre of their prayer life and actions. How can we worship the God of Love faithfully when we slaughter animals on such a vast scale?

On a personal level I have had two fantastic terms at St Stephen's House and am beginning a third. I have never been in such a supportive institution, where everyone takes his or her faith so seriously and reflectively, though we know how to enjoy ourselves too. I am also exploring the Franciscan Third Order: Francis may have lived in the 12th and 13th century but he speaks to me more insistently than most more recent theologians. Finally of course I look forward to and feel immensely supported by my own little Cursillo Group as well as by the movement in general.

Victoria Mort: my specific ministries are to:

- play the piano at Holy Family
- organise and sometimes do the flowers at the University Church
- be on the committee and a trustee of the Gatehouse alternative cafe for homeless people + volunteer there as backup sometimes
- sit on Churches Together in Central Oxford and represent them and the homelessness agencies on the Local Policing Forum
- ...otherwise I write songs and music and would be glad of any suggestions as to how these might be shared.

Dates for the diary...

Saturday 13th June (10.30 for 11am)

Diocesan Ultreya & Picnic

St Mary's Church, Church Street, Princes Risborough HP27 2AN

Friday 10th to Sunday 12th July

Cursillo Leaders' Workshop, Rydal Hall, Ambleside, Cumbria

Saturday 5th September

GB Ultreya - highly recommended! The annual opportunity to meet Cursillistas from all over England, Scotland and Wales. Programme starts at 9:30, includes the normal components of an Ultreya, a walk of witness through Ely, and ends with a Eucharist in Ely Cathedral.

Further information from the BACC website: www.ukcursillo.org

And details on the Ely Cursillo website: cursillo.ely.anglican.org/

Saturday 4th October (10 for 10.30am)

Diocesan Ultreya & AGM, Soltau Centre, Stubbings (nr Maidenhead)

Friday 9th to Sunday 11th October

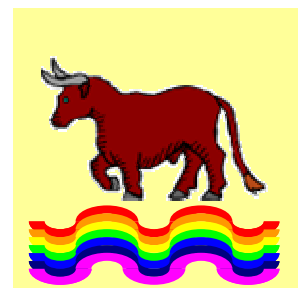
Cursillo Leaders' Workshop, Offa House, Leamington Spa

Thursday 12th to Sunday 15th November

Oxford Cursillo #7, Cold Ash Centre

See www.oxfordcursillo.co.uk for the latest updates...

Cursillo is a movement of the Church providing a method by which Christians are empowered to grow through prayer, study and action, and enabled to share God's love with everyone.



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