

# Oxon Fourth



## Oxford Anglican

# Cursillo®

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## Give away a way!

A year ago I invited us to consider the question "What is Cursillo?". At a meeting last November, Revd Hugh Burgess, British Anglican Cursillo's National Spiritual Director, asked that same question but in a particularly thought provoking way. When a fellow lift traveller overhears you mention the word or spots your badge and asks what Cursillo is, how do you answer?

You haven't got long, so be brief and keep it simple, simple enough that it trips off the tongue without having to look anything up or dig deep into your memory!

The irony is that for many of us we might prefer to say what it isn't. It's not a secret society. It's not a separatist movement, sect, clique or denomination. It's not an exclusive membership club. It's not Spanish! I'm sure you could add more.

But what is it - in a nutshell? Try this in the lift: "Cursillo is a way of building strong Christian discipleship in local churches"? It's easy to remember and your fellow traveller now knows it's for Christians, within their church, not away from it, and it's about method not membership. Like a pilgrimage, it's about a journey, a way of travelling.

If you've got a few more floors to go before parting, your companion may want to know more about this 'way'. You could say "It helps Christians to develop their relationship with Christ and to keep growing in prayer, study and action." "How?" he or she asks. "People are invited to meet in small groups, seek spiritual direction, adopt a rule of life and participate in a three day course on Christian Living."

So what's so special about Cursillo? Surely it's the **way** we do small groups and a three day course. It's the simple tried and tested 'agenda' we have for each of these elements.

*And now for a challenge!* Have we traditionally seen our way of "building discipleship" as being mainly about getting people to participate in the three day course, with the small groups as an important follow up? Surely that restricts our contribution to only those for whom three days away is both possible and appealing. But small groups, modelled on our Group Reunion 'way', cost no money and little time, can happen at any time and in any place, and require no organising apart from agreeing when and where to meet. They can provide a source of growth for everyone. They can be our gift to every church.

And that is the challenge Hugh Burgess has set us: to make our 'way' of small group meetings available in *every church in the land*.

No secret - give it away. Give away our 'way'.

Love and prayers,

Peter

Lay Director

ULTREYA!

## ‘WITHOUT A VISION...’



It's interesting that the Cursillo weekend begins with the theme 'Ideal'. This can be a hard notion to dig into for people, since it seems, at first sight, to be so far removed from how people commonly think about their lives. Money—yes; health—yes; autonomy—yes; happiness—yes. But *ideal*? Yet we're right to place 'ideal' front and centre as we think about the renewal of discipleship, be it at a weekend or at any other time. The Old Testament prophet once declared, 'Without a vision the people perish!' That's what lies beneath our concern with 'ideal': that God puts before us a vision, God's idea of the fullness of humanity. That ideal comes to us in Jesus of Nazareth. He shows us the Way, gives us his Life, shares his Truth. Indeed, he is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and for that very reason he's our Ideal too. In fact, the Cursillo method describes the Ideal in somewhat less straightforward terms, but it comes to the same thing: faith and grace both have their source in Jesus Christ. It's important for us to grasp, though, that he's both the source and the *end* ('Alpha and Omega He', as we sing at Christmas). As the Ideal, Jesus Christ is both behind us as the source for the life we live, and also ahead of us as the goal of the life we live. Paul described Jesus crucified and risen as expressing 'the full stature' of our humanity. There we come closest to what the Cursillo method means when it speaks of 'Ideal'. For disciples, the ideal is living into the full stature of our humanity trusting in the company of Jesus (faith), and with the tools given to us by the Holy Spirit (grace).

People do indeed perish without a vision. Maybe our world isn't void of vision. But is there a brighter, clearer, better vision than the one that, like a Day-star, shines over all humanity and through all of human history from the first rays of Easter morning? That's the Ideal to which—to *whom*—we're committed, and to which we progress day by day:

*UL TREYA!*

*Charles Miller*

*Spiritual Director*

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The Lord has a real hope in store for us because Jesus has walked our way and shares our hardest times.

That blessing often comes not in trite words but after a struggle like Jacob's (Genesis 32.22-31)..

Geoffrey Herbert "Attitudes to Suffering".

*Alston Shaw*



## *How Do I Love Thee?*

*(Sonnet 43)*

*Elizabeth Barret Browning, 1806-1861*

*How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of being and ideal grace.  
I love thee to the level of every day's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for right.  
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,*

Really I would like to tell my story backwards, relating how my life is now, with just a few little pointers to past events showing how my wonderful God brought me to this place. But that wouldn't do justice to the grace, mercy and blessings he has poured out on me and those I love, and for which I am so thankful.

Sometimes things happen and we're not sure why. They may have a sense of rightness about them but we remain perplexed as to their meaning or function.

For example, how could I have understood at the time what it meant that I became moved to the point of tears whenever I would read my bible?

Sometimes we may have a conviction to do something which we can't explain at the time. We may do it over many years, and it may cost us money.

For example, how could I have understood why I felt compelled to keep going to French classes all these years, when my husband, after a bad work experience there, said he would never return to France?

Sometimes something will happen which shocks or surprises us, and we wonder, what on earth's going on?

For example, how could I have understood why I fell on my front during a Christian gathering? It was an isolated incident and set me thinking for a long while.

Sometimes we may live with a person for many many years and think we know everything about them, but then one day they will turn around and give us the surprise of our life.

And that is what my husband did one weekend in March

I found myself, with David, in a small town in France with a group of missionaries. Perhaps given the examples above you have an idea of how I came to be there, although you may be wondering how I persuaded David to come. All I can say is that God must have had a hand in it.

On that Saturday, David and I sat at a picnic table facing a church pastor and a missionary. What I thought was to be a fun picnic lunch turned out to be an interview.

I answered my questions as best I could (in very imperfect French) and then the pastor turned his focus on my husband, who isn't a regular church goer. The pastor asked David about me, my life, my faith and the things that are important to me. He was unwavering in his responses and had obviously prepared for this event. I had to hold back tears as he spoke.

At the end I was told that although only single people or married couples would normally be accepted, there was a place for me on the mission team if I wanted it.

I accepted gladly, with David's blessing. I would be travelling out to France as often as family, money and work commitments permitted.

The story of my Cursillo Fourth Day is one of how God has shown His love and care, and his plan for me, in very tangible ways. To Him be Praise and Glory.

But there is another story, my husband's story, and how God is working in his life in a private and gentle way. And witnessing God working His purpose out in David's life is the most exciting thing of all for me.

AS

*Isaiah 55:8-9 (English Standard Version)*

*<sup>8</sup>For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.*

*<sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are my ways higher than your ways  
And my thoughts than your thoughts.*

ULTREYA

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## BOOKS

There are so many wonderful, inspirational books available to read. If you have read something that you would like to recommend please let us know and send a short summary to [editor@oxfordcursillo.co.uk](mailto:editor@oxfordcursillo.co.uk)







## God's In!

My five year old grand daughter who embraces everything in life and is so excited that she is learning to read, was having a fun day out during the Easter holidays when she saw this sign on a door — 'GOODS IN' Excitedly she exclaimed to her daddy.....

*'Daddy, God's in,' can we go in and see him?'*

BM

**You do not need to go anywhere special to find God.**

God is at your fingertips when you do the work you are called to do - in the office or at home, when you feed and dress your children, forgive them and read them to sleep.

Wherever you go, whatever you do, whether you know it or not, God is always there. To become more aware of God's incarnate presence all we need to do is to look more intensely, listen more carefully, think more imaginatively, see more deeply, feel more attentively. The senses have it.

*(Fr. Daniel O'Leary, The Tablet, 13 December 2014)*

Alison Shaw

## Diocesan Ultreya & Picnic



At Diocesan Church House

**Saturday 20th June**

**10:30 for 11am start**

Followed by a 'bring & share'  
picnic lunch

Has your re-union group thought about hosting an

**ULTREYA**

If you would like to, please contact Caraline email: [4th.day@oxfordcursillo.co.uk](mailto:4th.day@oxfordcursillo.co.uk)

**ULTREYA GB 2015**

**Saturday 5th September**

**Blackburn Cathedral**

[www.blackburncursillo.org](http://www.blackburncursillo.org)



## What Cursillo means to me.....



### MY TOP FIVE MEMORIES FROM THE OXFORD CURSILLO#15

#### Number 5:

Being with, and getting to know like-minded Christians in a peaceful setting. Douai Abbey provided the perfect backdrop for this course, and it served well to deepen our faith. I was conscious of the fact that all participants on the course were at a different stage of their respective faith journeys, but that we were all headed in the same direction, with God's guiding hand.

#### Number 4:

Sharing delicious food and drink with fellow participants and leaders in the monastic dining-room of the Abbey. Also, having the occasional opportunity to explore and appreciate the tranquil surrounds and decor of the location, including going into the Abbey itself.

#### Number 3:

Working with my table group, especially following the fifteen Rollos which were delivered over the weekend. A particular recollection was singing 'Amazing Grace' to the tune of 'Auld Lang Syne', accompanied by one of the members strumming his ukulele!

#### Number 2:

Entering the candle-lit Chapel on the Saturday evening after a full-on day of Rollos and group tasks. This provided us all with a time for reflection and meditation following a thought-provoking day. There were candles laid out on the steps to the altar in the shape of a Cross which was particularly striking. The atmosphere was contemplative, peaceful and nourishing.

#### Number 1:

Being a central part of the Clausura at the end of the course, and heading up the aisle of the Chapel to be greeted by the Bishop of Oxford, John Pritchard. This was undoubtedly the climax of the weekend, and it didn't disappoint. It was an uplifting experience, full of joy, emotion and celebration. Thank you all.

SIMON LANGDEN

# Dates for your diary

## **OXFORD #16 Clausura**

Sunday 19th April 2015

1:45 for 2pm start

## **St Gabriel's Convent Chapel**

The Ridge, Cold Ash, Thatcham

RG18 9HU

## **Ultreya! & "Bring & Share" Lunch**

Saturday 16th May 2015

11am for 11:30 start

## **Church of the Holy Spirit,**

Bedgrove, Aylesbury

HP21 7UE

## **Diocesan Ultreya! & "Bring & Share" Picnic**

Saturday 20th June 2015

10:30 for 11am start

## **Diocesan Church House**

North Hinksey

Oxford

OX2 0NB

## **OXFORD #17 Weekend**

Thursday 22nd - Sunday 25th

October 2015

## **Cold Ash Centre,**

The Ridge, Cold Ash, Thatcham

RG18 9HU

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Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue of Oxon Fourth.

Is there anything you would like to contribute to the next issue?

Any thoughts, prayers or study recommendations

Any images, jokes or reflections that you would like to share?

Then please send to [magazine.editor@oxfordcursillo.co.uk](mailto:magazine.editor@oxfordcursillo.co.uk)

**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**

**Cursillo is faith funded so thank you to the increasing number of Cursillistas who support Oxford Cursillo through Gift Aid donations, particularly by monthly standing order. Under Gift Aid, each £1 donated is worth £1.25 to Oxford Cursillo, the extra 25p coming courtesy of HM Revenue and Customs. If you would like to start making monthly donations, please contact Ann Moss at: [treasurer@oxfordcursillo.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@oxfordcursillo.co.uk)**

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