

Oxon Fourth



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Message from our Spiritual Director – Rev Kevin Beer

Who should we invite to a Cursillo Weekend?



Take a look around your local congregation. Hopefully there are committed Christians around you who would hope to be a positive influence for Christ among their friends, colleagues and community. Perhaps they would do so with a bit of encouragement. Are they looking for renewal and growth in their lives and seeking a deeper personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Then please introduce them to Cursillo as a method of support for their Christian witness and apostolic action. Invite them to a Group Reunion or an Ultreya! so that they find like-minded people, other ordinary members of churches who love Jesus and have responded to his call. Explain how the Cursillo method mirrors Bishop Steven’s new diocesan strategy:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cursillo</u> <u>“Enabling us to share God’s love”</u> Piety/Prayer Study including our mission environments Action</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Diocesan Strategy</u> <u>“Become more Christlike”</u> Contemplation Compassion for those around us Courage (to act)</p>

The purpose of a Cursillo weekend is no less than to change “saints” (baptised believers) into “apostles” – those who are sent out to witness and work to make God’s Kingdom real in the places where they live and work. In the words of the founders: *“Cursillo is for baptised Christians, who are reasonably stable and mature, with a desire for God’s love, and a longing to be set on fire with a zeal to do His work in the church and the world”*. In practice this only rules out anyone who is less than 21 years of age, or anyone who is currently in need of pastoral support or counselling, e.g. following bereavement or a relationship breakdown.

As we hold our Weekends at “Retreat Centres”, it should also be explained that a Weekend is not a traditional retreat, except perhaps on the first evening, but thereafter it is an “advance” in Christian living, inviting active participation and perhaps trying new things (although, of course, no-one is forced to do anything that they don’t want to do).

I hope that you will join me in praying, studying the above in relation to your congregation and acting on it as the Spirit leads you. Why? Well, NOT because we hope to run another Weekend in 2019, but because we want to see this diocese and all its congregations grow in faith and enabled to share God’s love with everyone.

Ultreya!
Kevin

As the new editor of OxonFourth, I welcome reports on Cursillo events, other articles of interest to Cursillistas, and your ideas for other items you would like to see included.

Send articles and ideas to me at magazine.editor@oxford.cursillo.co.uk

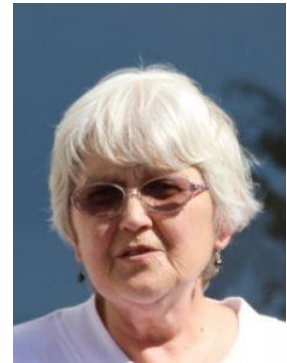
Deadline for the autumn issue is September 15 for publication in October.



Vivien Leeming

Letter from our Lay Director – Pauline Stanton Saringer

I hope to come
to your
Group Reunion



Dear Fellow Cursillistas,

I am happy that we are able to send you a new OxonFourth. We are grateful that Vivien Leeming has taken on the editorship. Vivien and her husband David live in Quainton, Bucks and made their Weekend (some years ago) in the Catholic Cursillo. They are now worshipping in their local Village Anglican Church. Vivien and David have not had the opportunity to meet many Oxford Cursillistas yet, but are regular members (with me) of the Group Reunion which meets in Peter Watsham's home. Our group did sterling work hosting and catering for the BACC national gathering of LDs, SDs and BACC reps in Bicester last November. (More of that later).

I am planning to visit as many Group Reunions as possible this year – so invitations would be welcome! Which reminds me to remind all of you to keep Elizabeth Taylor, the Communications Rep informed of any changes in your contact details so that we do not lose touch.

Please keep Johanna Raffan and the team in your prayers as they prepare for the Oxford#18 Weekend. There are still some spaces for guests.

I look forward to seeing you at an Ultreya this year and at the Clausura on Sunday, April 22nd to support our new Cursillistas.

With best wishes,

Pauline

Ultreya!

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.

National Ultreya

A day of joy and inspiration



Elaine Mordaunt reports on our National Ultreya at Southwell in Nottinghamshire last September

Five of us from the Oxford Diocese arrived at the Minster School in Southwell – three from Abingdon, one from Bicester and me from Maidenhead. Southwell is a very small town with a population similar to Faringdon in Oxfordshire.

Inside, the spacious dining area was laid out with stalls selling all sorts of Cursillo related items, and much else. I bought butterfly buttons and some cards for Palanca.

After queuing for coffee and tea we moved into the assembly hall for a welcome before breaking into floating reunion groups. People had come from all over the country so it was interesting hearing how other groups get on with Cursillo. The Action Talk was given by Linda Tucker who told us about how God had helped her cope with the many difficulties she and her family had recently gone through. Revd Cynthia Hebden, the National Spiritual Director, gave us news of the forthcoming major revision of the Cursillo Resources Manual and warned us to hold authentic Ultreyas. Everything was interspersed with inspiring worship songs. The new National President is easy to spot as he generally wears a colourful rainbow waistcoat. He's a good leader and very encouraging. Then we broke for a Ploughman's lunch. In the crowds I lost our own friends but found other interesting people to talk with.

The next event was The Procession of Faith through the streets of Southwell to the Minster with our banners held high.

When we arrived at the Minster we had to wait until a wedding finished. We had fun greeting the



departing guests with clapping and our colourful banners. Inside the Minster, which was packed out, we had a very moving Eucharist and the Bishop of Nottingham and Southwell gave us an inspiring sermon. Afterwards we walked back to the school for a cup of tea and to say farewell. Our thanks go to the local Cursillo members who had organised a brilliant day.

It's the second National Ultreya that I've been to and again I really enjoyed it. As I was staying nearby I was able to pop back for a better look at the Minster. I was very moved by their wonderful modern models of the Stations of the Cross by Jonathan Clark that anyone can touch.

Photo shows, left to right: Ann Moss, Barbara Earl and Linda Hobbs, all from Abingdon

Ultreya 2018 will be at Chelmsford on Saturday September 1st

Programme

- 9.15 am Registration at the Cathedral**
- 10.15 Welcome, notices for the day and worship**
- 10.50 Trevor King, BACC President**
- 11.00 Ultreya – floating groups**
- 11.45 Witness talk and follow up**
- 12.25 Introduction to National Ultreya 2019**
- 12.30 Break for lunch**
- 2.00 pm Assemble for Walk of Witness along pedestrian High St**
- 3.00 Service in Cathedral**
- 4.30 Finish of day activities**
- Evening:**
- 6.30 for 7pm Gather for supper and Ceilidh dance in the Cathedral**
- 10.00 Finish of evening activities.**

More details from www.chelmsfordcursillo.com

Our new president Trevor King gave an inspiring witness talk at a meeting of the British Anglican Cursillo Council at Bicester last November

God has a plan for each one of us



One of my favourite images of God working in our lives, especially during the hard times, is the picture of God weaving a beautiful tapestry with both light and dark coloured threads (joyful and sorrowful times). As we live our lives we usually see only the back of the tapestry, knotted ends and frayed edges that just look a mess. If we could see the front of the tapestry we would see the whole picture, that God is doing something beautiful, a work of art, that only makes sense when it is seen as a whole.

The back of my tapestry is a right mess! No obvious picture at all, and the knotted ends are numerous! They include 3 entirely different significant periods of employment (college lecturing, managing a church based charity and bus driving), plus a number of shorter aborted false starts. I've been laid off twice, been unemployed, had two periods of quite serious depression, one of which led to me losing the job that I know God had called me to, and worst of all, my first wife Steph dying at just 46, 17 years ago.

On the brighter side there's two very happy marriages, two wonderful sons, 3 gorgeous grandchildren, I've been a Borough Mayor, I have a real sense of achievement having set up The Rainbow Centre charity, I've been actively involved in Cursillo for over 25 years including being a Lay Rector twice and serving as York Diocesan Lay Director, and now becoming national president!

I'm beginning to realise that, whilst we won't see the whole tapestry picture until I'm in Glory, as I get older and look over my shoulder so to speak I start to get occasional glimpses of the front and it starts to make some sense, the picture starts to come together.

As a child my parents brought me up to go to church regularly, I sang in the choir, went on church youth weekends and as a family we started going to Scargill House in the Yorkshire dales, a Christian holiday and retreat centre. When I went off to polytechnic I stopped regular church attendance but the year I graduated, 1979, my new wife Steph and I went to Scargill for a holiday and, quite simply, the experience changed our lives. We gave our lives to Christ there and then. We started going to church regularly again, got involved with the PCC, the singing group and so on and then in 1991 Steph came across this Cursillo thing - the Weekend. It had such a profound effect on her that I decided that I wanted a bit of it too and so in February 1992 I went on Chester 10 at Saviour House, Bollington near Macclesfield: my life was changed again.

There are many ways of describing a Cursillo Weekend. Some describe it as the journey from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday, others say it's like the climb up the Mount of Transfiguration and back down again. Some say it changed their faith from black and white to full glowing technicolour, others describe it as:

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

For me the Weekend asked four questions:

Who am I? Who was Christ? What did he do for me? So what am I going to do about it?

I was 35, I'd spent 9 years teaching in an FE college, been a Borough councillor and ended up as Mayor, made a career change in 1990, moving to York to work for the then Yorkshire & Humberside Tourist Board but it had all gone wrong after just 3 months, spent 18 months unemployed and had just become a bus driver. And now I was being challenged to think very seriously about my response to what Christ did for me, how it should affect my life, what I could do to serve our Lord. I realised even during the Cursillo closing service that I wanted to use my gifts and abilities, whatever they were, in some way for the Lord in His Church.

I didn't have much idea how but I started to look for a suitable admin or management job in The Church Times and elsewhere. It took 5 years to find the right one. I did however become involved, with Steph, on a Steering Group setting up Lichfield Cursillo (it's a great sadness that it's no longer active), and Steph serving as the first Lay Director from 1994 I think. I staffed on weekends, was Lay Rector on Lichfield #3, was BACC Rep and joined the first National Standing Committee where I served as BACC Pages editor.

Finally I found the job I believed The Lord had for me and we moved to Scarborough in 1997 when I was appointed manager of a new church-based charity for the homeless that became what's now The Rainbow Centre. There was no Cursillo movement in York diocese but we quickly linked up with a couple of other Cursillistas and started growing the movement there. Again I served on the Steering Group, this time as Chairman, and York #1 was planned for May 2002. I was to be the observing Lay Rector on York # 1 and then serve as the first Lay Director and lead York #2.

Before that happened though my life changed again, very suddenly. Steph died after 11 days of illness in July 2000. She was 46 and our boys were 18 and 16. Of course I was devastated but the Rainbow Café was due to open at work in the October so I kept going for about 12 months before hitting the bereavement brick wall. So although I did staff on York #1 I was in no fit state to take on either being Lay Rector of York 2 or Lay Director.

I remarried in 2003, Steph's best friend from school Anna. We had known each other since 1970 when we went to the same church as teenagers. Anna moved to Scarborough and life settled down again. I served on the York Secretariat and I staffed on weekends, being Lay Rector of York #7 in 2006.

Then in 2007 my health fell apart again. After 9 years running the Rainbow Centre we hit problems with some European funding, I believed it was all my fault, became seriously depressed and eventually had to leave. I soon went back to bus driving, then went back in adult training until retiring 6 years later.

A couple of months before retiring I was asked to consider becoming the next York Lay Director. I hadn't been a member of the Secretariat for a while and had thought that my time had passed but God had different plans. And then no more than a month after agreeing to do it Sally, the then National President, asked York Cursillo to host Ultreya GB 2016! We welcomed nearly 500 Cursillistas to celebrate in York Minster and University.

Soon after this I was asked to become National President.

When I retired I also took on project managing and fund raising for the replacement of the church hall, scout hut and main nave roof at our own church, St Mark's in Scarborough. I consider this to be my main ongoing practical Apostolic Action at the moment, alongside being President. We need to raise about £800,000 in all and we've already got the first £100,000, so there's a bit to go yet!

Going back to the tapestry image, I now look back and think that if the job at the Yorkshire & Humberside Tourist Board had worked out in 1990 it wouldn't have been so obvious to me on my Cursillo Weekend 2 years later that I should seek to get a job serving the Church. If I hadn't suffered bereavement depression in 2001 & 2 I would have been York Lay Director then and probably not been involved with, let alone in charge of, organising the National Ultreya in York 15 years later. And I wouldn't have come to Sally's notice to end up here now!

God has a purpose for all of us, he knows His plans for us and they are wonderful, despite the mess we often make of things and despite life events that deflect us from His path. Even if life doesn't turn out as you planned it, the tapestry He weaves in it will be wonderful, as long as you trust in Him and decide to follow Him. But beware, when He's in charge fasten your safety belt, you never know where you'll end up!

ULTREYA !

What my Cursillo Weekend meant to me

I was particularly struck by our table leader's witness about a Street Ministry. When I came home I attended a Listening Course organised by Jane Lane from my church, Christ Church, Abingdon, and I received the basic training in Banbury.

I have been out on the streets a few times now. The Cursillo course has given me courage and I have discovered that it is a joy to be helping people in trouble late at night in practical ways and chatting to them meaningfully. We hand out lollipops, as well as flip-flops and water as needed. Last time some girls thought we were doing a Trick or Treat stunt!

SALLY

I remember being blown away by the palanca - it was quite overwhelming, that all these people from around the world were praying for me, rooting for me and cheering me on. I remember feeling that what was happening that weekend was far beyond anything I'd initially imagined, and that God was working His purpose out in a big way over the four days. It gave me a boost to my confidence and a place I could add to the growing list of places I call 'home'.

LIBBY

The atmosphere made a strong impact on me – the conviction exuded by the team that God was present and actively supporting them and me and telling me I could have a close and friendly relationship with Him and that I should try hard to work in my environment to bring friends to Christ.

DAVID

Editor's Interview: PETER WATSHAM

Christ's message is radical

Former lay director of Oxford Anglican Cursillo, Peter Watsham, of Pitchcott, near Aylesbury, is leaving the area. He and his wife Joanna are moving to Devon. A locally licensed lay preacher, he is very active in local churches and he hosts a monthly Cursillo group reunion.



Question: *When did you make your Cursillo Weekend and what effect did it have on you?*

Answer: It was after attending a Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit in 2005 when our local Vicar of Burchetts Green and three of us met once a week to discuss our faith journey and plans for the parish. We read and discussed *The Purpose Driven Life* (What on earth am I here for?) by Rick Warren. We focused on growing the prayer life of our parish. Then Matthew Caminer, Lay Director of Oxford, phoned to introduce Cursillo to our Vicar and two of us booked a place on a Weekend. Oxford#2 in 2006 gave me an overwhelming sense of God's love and grace and shifted the seat of my faith from my head to my heart. It gave me an even stronger sense of purpose and love in fellowship.

Q *How did Cursillo help you in your working environment?*

A Joanna and I both worked in the company I started in 1982 helping Human Resources/Personnel departments around Britain and Europe make the best use of personal computers and IT – a combination of hardware supply, software development and sales and consultancy. The first person I recruited was a person of strong and active faith. As the company grew, others knew that we were both practising Christians and we sometimes remarked to each other that the company was built on a foundation of prayer. This was important as there were often difficult decisions to make. By 1999 when Joanna and I moved to Hurley, the company, based in Marlow, was employing 80 people. I appointed an MD to give me time to look over the horizon and help bring up our daughters.

Q *Tell us about your work for your local church and the Cursillo Movement.*

A Ever since my secondary school years during which I was confirmed, weekly attendance at Communion has been important, and while I have always had a strong faith and relationship with Christ, I am more conscious than ever that I am still an infant and a work in progress. In every church I have somehow acquired an active role, nearly always including work with children. Six months before moving to Pitchcott, I became Lay Director of Oxford Anglican Cursillo. My focus was trying to encourage the practice of Group Reunion and its spread to encompass people who had yet to – and might never – experience a Cursillo Weekend. Adoption of this method by which Christians support and are accountable to one another locally must be one of our greatest gifts to the Church.

Q *Has the "climate" for Christians in this country changed much during this time? Is it harder to be a Christian today?*

A For many years now the population has become less involved in Church. Where attendance might once have been "normal" and Christian beliefs and values might have at least permeated people's subconscious, Church goers have become more widely regarded as on the fringe, irrelevant and possibly just pursuing their own sense of importance and self-esteem. It is now more acceptable to ridicule and criticise the Church and its members than to give credence to its beliefs and values. While British Christians certainly cannot claim to experience persecution on anything like the scale suffered by others

in many parts of the world, we can feel increasingly under attack. Our country is becoming increasingly secular and people more apathetic, sceptical or hostile towards religion in general, which is perceived by many to have a negative rather than positive impact on society. Paradoxically there seems to be an increased desire, especially among young people, for purpose, something to believe in, a set of strong values to embrace, a means of making the world a better place. A fundamentalist approach to Islam has been able to feed this desire and radicalise people with disastrous results.

Q *How can we meet these challenges?*

A Christ's message of support for the poor and those who mourn, the virtue of meekness, a passion for justice, mercy, purity of heart, suffering to see right prevail, loving our enemy and taking up our cross is nothing if it is not radical - a call to love radically!

The church surely has the most powerful antidote to radical Islam and the answer to emptiness and the search for purpose.

It is the call to radical Christianity, to find Christ and place him at the centre of life and grow an ever-closer lifelong relationship with him, as tutor, mentor, the most loving friend, advocate and stairway to heaven - in short, our Saviour. It's time we did our own radicalising!

My hope and prayer, therefore, is that the increasing level of hostility and attack will act as a wake-up call to Christians; that God will help us to strengthen our faith and provoke us to re-examine what we, Christ's body, the Church, are for, to grow closer to Christ, seek and discover his direction and renew our commitment to bring the powerful, radical love of Christ to the marginalised and needy.

We must earn recognition as a powerful source of forgiveness, healing and love, and a strong force for good.

I believe the Cursillo method is a powerful wake-up tool. We can help strengthen the body of Christ as people who recognise that Christ is counting on us to grow his kingdom, and who count on Him for inspiration, support and direction.

As I have always stressed whenever working with children, finding and getting to know Christ as a real, loving friend is our most important purpose – the rest follows from that.



BE STILL, BE SILENT,
AND LET YOUR GOD LOVE YOU.

From the homily at an Ash Wednesday
service at Westcott, Bucks.

Bertha to Becket, a BACC pilgrimage

*Barbara Essam felt humbled by the courage and faith
of the founders of the Early English Church*

I was privileged to be able to attend the BACC pilgrimage 2016 entitled Bertha to Becket. I have to confess I did not book it with particularly high-minded or spiritual motivation; it appeared an interesting tour in an area I hadn't visited for many years and a chance of a short summer break, meeting other Cursillo members. However it turned out to be not only that but much more!

We were based at the Friars at Aylesford, which is a Carmelite Order set in beautiful grounds near Maidstone. It has several chapels, one of which, St Joseph's, we worshipped in, a lake, a Peace garden and a pottery. So, a very tranquil and reflective setting for a busy itinerary. The team from Canterbury Cursillo had organised the whole programme superbly and had enlisted the help of Canon Christopher Dent to provide us with the historical background to each of the places we visited on the pilgrimage.

On the first day we travelled to St Augustine's cross, the memorial close to where he is thought to have landed on the Isle of Thanet, and then visited Minster Abbey, a Benedictine community where St Mildred was abbess. The abbey fell into ruins after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, but a group of nuns from Bavaria sought refuge here in 1937 and following internment and transfer to Devon during the Second World War, they were able to purchase the abbey and land, including a farm. The community is still flourishing, with a beautiful modern chapel built after a fire in 1993 and lovely grounds. It has a tea shop staffed by adults with learning disabilities and there are various workshops for them too. A Eucharist in All Saints Church, Whitstable completed the day after a visit to Reculver with its remains of the Roman fort and ruined church overlooking the beach (so a paddle and ice cream were also possible!).

Our final day began at St Martin's, Canterbury, the oldest church in southern England where Bertha, wife of King Ethelbert, worshipped and welcomed Augustine. On then to St Augustine's abbey, a fascinating archaeological site and museum, which really gave us an idea of the history of the Early Church in England, from Augustine through to the Normans until the Dissolution. Then to Canterbury Cathedral where as well as a guided tour, we had the great privilege of sharing in a Eucharist in the Eastern crypt where Thomas Becket was first buried and where the stunning sculpture by Anthony Gormley, "Transport", was suspended above us. The preacher reminded us that at the end of a pilgrimage we may well have changed but the challenge is to return to our normal lives and tell our stories, which we will do with the grace of God, prayer and the help of our fellow travellers. Choral Evensong was a beautiful and moving finale to the visit and we were then treated to supper and entertainment by the Canterbury Cursillistas.

It was all such a memorable experience, humbling to reflect on the struggles, courage and faith of those founders of the Early Church and an opportunity to enjoy a few days of fellowship, worship and laughter with Cursillistas from all over the country. If there is another pilgrimage, which may well happen in a couple of years as both so far have been very successful, I would certainly recommend it as a deepening yet fun experience. It would be good too if a few more from Oxford Cursillo could be there!

*Editor's note: This article was held over
during the interim between editors*

Dates for your diary

Ultreyas

Sat May 12, 2018

9.30 for 10am

All Saints, Ascot Heath,

London Road, Ascot

SL5 8DQ

Sat June 9th 2018

Soltau Centre, Stubbings,

Maindenhead

National Ultreya 2018

Saturday Sept 1 at Chelmsford

Details from:

www.chelmsfordcursillo.com

Leaders' Workshops

Fri – Sun March 23 – 25, 2018

Shepherd's Dene, Riding Mill,

Northumberland.

Fri to Sun Sept 28 – 30, 2018

Purely Chase, Athertone,

Warwickshire.

Fri to Sun March 22 – 24, 2019

Wistaston Hall, Crewe.

Further details: CLW Administrator, Paul Thacker

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CLW Convenor Rev Judy Craig-Peck

clw@anglicancursillo.co.uk Tel 01604 743734

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue of OxonFourth.

The next issue is planned for the Autumn and items for inclusion should be sent to:

Magazine.editor@oxfordcursillo.co.uk to arrive not later than September 15, 2018.

Please send ideas or suggestions for articles well before this date.

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