

Oxon Fourth



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Welcome to the 2019 spring issue. Our theme this time seems to be journeys. We have Elizabeth Taylor's action talk on how her life has been a series of journeys, we have a report and photos of Oxford#19 – a journey of faith for all who took part, and my Editor's Interview features Lisa, a Cursillista who is soon to commence ordination training – yet another journey!

Deadline for the autumn issue is **Sept 10** for publication in October.

Send articles to me at magazine.editor@oxfordcursillo.co.uk

Vivien Leeming, Editor



Message from our Spiritual Director, the Rev Tony Price



New ways of our being Cursillo

It looks like we got Oxford #19 done only just in time! Since then other dioceses have already had to cancel their planned weekends because of the Covid-19 pandemic. As it was, we were faced with quite a list of new regulations and precautions which the Cold Ash sisters insisted upon. Some of them felt excessive and unnecessary, but we were probably the first group they had welcomed since they received new guidelines from their own church authorities, and they were being rightly cautious. They run a care home with elderly and vulnerable residents, so it was important for them to avoid any possibility of infection.

We were being careful, too. At most of the weekends I've attended, the Peace is exchanged at the first Eucharist with a polite handshake, which soon evolves into hugs as we get to know each other. This time we agreed we would abstain from handshakes and hugs (mostly), and while Communion was offered in both kinds, there were some team members and guests who preferred to receive the bread only. We did our best to observe all the advice about hand-washing, and were most scrupulous about using the alcohol gel before entering the dining room.

In spite, or partly because, of all this, it was an excellent weekend. There's nothing quite like staffing on a Cursillo Weekend – if you've never done it, and would like to, do let the Secretariat know as we begin to think towards Oxford #20 – next year? Whenever the world is normal again? Who knows? The team led by Jan Jeffreys really gelled; the rollos and meditations were of a consistently high quality, each bearing the very personal stamp of the team member delivering them; the special extras (Focus on the Cross, Act of Reconciliation, Light Meditation) were all profound and moving; the guests each played their part in the table groups with enthusiasm.

But what now? After most weekends, we come back to our parishes, expecting also to meet other members of the diocesan Cursillo group at the Welcome Ultreya! and be introduced to a supportive Group Reunion. This year, we find ourselves in what feels like a different world. The national Church has decided to suspend all public meetings and acts of worship, and there is talk about "finding new ways of being Church". In the same spirit, we approach the task of finding new ways of being, or doing, Cursillo. We are required to cancel all Ultreyas for the foreseeable future, including the Welcome Ultreya at Kidlington in April. Some parish churches are exploring ways in which clergy can stream videos of their sermons so that congregations can enjoy them in their own homes. Is the sermon *really* the part of the service that people most want to 'enjoy'? I liked to think so when I was preaching every Sunday... now that I'm more often one of those being preached at – sorry, *to* – I'm much less sure. We go for the joy of being with other believers, singing and hearing the music, receiving the Sacrament, occupying a part of the sacred space "where prayer has been valid". Oxford Cursillo probably doesn't have the resources to offer this kind of service. (Unless you know different?)

But the Group Reunion provides a more manageable model. We may not be able to meet in each other's homes. But let's try to keep in touch with the other members of our local group, perhaps with a video conference call via Skype or Google Hangouts. Many of us have the equipment to do this: all it takes is a computer or tablet and a broadband connection. If, like me, you're not *quite* sure how to make this work, most of us probably know some young person or relative who will be more than happy to show us – maybe even be well impressed that we want to know! At the very least, keep in touch with your group by phone to cheer and encourage one another.

And let's all take part in whatever we can of what our own parish churches offer. If it's not a streamed service, most churches will be open for people to pray in private. Let's take advantage of that and pray for our communities and for the whole world; for all those who are ill whether seriously or more mildly; and especially for the heroic medics, nurses, doctors and all health care workers, that they may have the strength and courage to carry on in the face of this crisis.

**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.**

Oxford#19:

A joyful journey!



Amid anxiety about the corona virus – there were no hugs or kisses this time – Oxford19 went ahead in March with 10 guests and 15 team members, pictured above, in the grounds of Cold Ash Retreat Centre near Newbury.

As usual it was a joyful journey through talks and discussions, prayer and meditation, with early morning Eucharist and other services, lots of music and wonderful hymns. We had a party, and entertainment with much hilarity and wonderful fellowship, and many lovely surprises. In all this we were wonderfully led by our Lay Rector Jan Jeffreys, with spiritual advisors the Rev Tony Price and his wife, the Rev Alison Price. Meanwhile we were fed with plentiful food and snacks by the Convent.

A large congregation of families and friends awaited the new Cursillistas and their sponsors at the Clausura held in St Gabriel's Church where the Right Rev Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester was both celebrant and preacher at the Eucharist. The Bishop, who has been on a Cursillo Weekend, presented the guests with their Cursillo crosses. Each table group stood before the congregation and gave us their impressions of the weekend.

In his sermon Bishop Colin said Cursillo emphasised spirituality and this underpinned all its actions. "We are trying to be a more Christ-like church, a more compassionate and loving community, and Cursillo is like this."

After the service presentations were made to Bishop Colin and to Pauline Stanton-Salinger. See page 6.



What my Cursillo Weekend meant to me

My Oxford Anglican Cursillo weekend 19 at Cold Ash in March 2020 was a revelation. In addition to the joy of fellowship in the moment it has given me a route map towards a deeper spirituality going forward, and food to nourish me in many aspects of the work I do within the Diocese. Many, many thanks to all those on the team and elsewhere who gave their time and offered prayers for us, the guests.

Caroline Kallipetis

I was so impressed and encouraged that the Anglican Church has such an organisation within it. The generosity and love of the staff and the example on servant leadership was powerful; the strong emphasis on grace and vulnerability within the talks and last but by no means least, it was fun. I returned home refreshed and inspired by it all and will strongly recommend it.

Anne Nicholson

"I found my Cursillo weekend unique from any other weekend I've had - the fellowshiping and sharing, laughing and learning, what a wonderful gracious heavenly father we all share!

Rev Tony's biblical talks seemed to transport me to the place and times as it was happening. All the lovely times we worshipped together in the chapel, as well at the Taizè service with the anointing very special...."

Sandra Stevens

The quiet candlelit meditation was very special as was the story telling led by Tony. The team members giving Rollo talks all did a good job. Also special was the attention to detail and the team making sure our needs were met over the weekend and we felt comfortable. The encouraging notes etc from current team and previous people who had been on Cursillo continues to inspire. I also valued the good food and interaction/fellowship with everyone involved.

Jacky Long

A message from Pauline Stanton Saringer, stepping down as Lay Director after four and a half years



At the recent Clausura service for Oxford#19, I felt a real sense of Cursillistas coming together. We welcomed folk from Bristol and Chichester dioceses and of course, Peter Watsham was on the team, so Exeter was ably represented too!

That service marked the "official" end of my extended term as Lay Director although there will be a period of handover.

My able successors are Stu and Margaret Vaughan from Witney who will be joint Lay Directors. There are other Lay Director partnerships so we are not the first.

I am very pleased that they have agreed to serve and am sure that you will give them good support.

I can honestly say that I have enjoyed my time as Lay Director, but am aware that there were many things left undone. It has been good to get to know more Cursillistas and share in fellowship. I have been so grateful for the support and encouragement of the rest of the Secretariat- even though we still have not got a full complement.

I would like to say thank you to everyone, because on your behalf I was presented with a spoiling Amazon voucher and a lovely orchid – they are my favourites!

I have not yet thought what to spend the voucher on, but I will have fun deciding!

Bishop Colin who presided at the Clausura is also retiring, but not until October. However, we took the opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation for his support and encouragement for Oxford Cursillo. I hope he will enjoy the Garden Token and the bottle of something red and alcoholic!

I look forward to continuing fellowship with my Group Reunion and seeing you at Ultreyas.

There is only one way to end isn't there.....Ultreya!!



Stu and Margaret are ready to share role of lay director

Hello fellow Cursillistas,

We are Stu and Margaret Vaughan, and once Bishop Steven has given his blessing and everything is approved, we will be the joint Lay Directors for Oxford Cursillo, and thus giving Pauline a long-deserved break. We are not the first couple in the country to be Lay Directors - something I found out at a recent Ultreya after speaking to the National President Trevor King who, funnily enough was brought along by Pauline ... coincidence no doubt!

So a bit about ourselves. We live near RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire and have three (now grown up) children and two lovely grandchildren. In 2009 we started to worship at St Mary's, Witney and in 2011 we were confirmed by Bishop Colin.

Our first amazing experience of Cursillo was as guests at Douai Abbey on Oxford #10 when for a week afterwards we had to wear lead in our shoes! Since then we've been on team five times between us and most memorably together as Lay Rector and Rector's Gopher on Oxford #17 where we really learnt the power of group prayer after the Lead SA was admitted to hospital amongst other what could be called 'obstacles to grace'.

We are excited about taking this role on together and (with the team) tackling some of the challenges that currently face Oxford Cursillo. We were looking forward to a busy diary and attending as many Ultreyas we could. However, COVID-19 has challenged us to engage as a community in other ways. At the time of writing, church services are cancelled and we are turning to social media and video-conferencing to conduct virtual services. We in Oxford Cursillo are looking at holding the next Secretariat meeting via Skype and would encourage you all to explore holding Group Reunions (or just staying in touch) in a similar fashion albeit WhatsApp, Skype or Zoom etc as face to face contact is so important in times like these. We could post 'how to guides on the Oxford Anglican Cursillo website - just let us know! We pray the situation has improved by the time you read this, but please stay in touch with each other and remember COVID-19 shouldn't stop us achieving the things we want to achieve, just change the way in which we achieve them (if a little slower).

We hope to see you all in person sometime soon but until then please stay safe. *Stu and Margaret*

GOD CALLS US TO DIFFERENT TASKS AT VARIOUS STAGES IN OUR LIVES

Elizabeth Taylor retired as Communications Rep
at our AGM where she also gave this action talk at the Ultreya



*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*

Ecclesiastes 3

The text I chose to work with may seem a strange one. I chose it because it reflects how I am looking at life now. Much of what I was doing whilst living in Bicester has been brought to a close and I have time to think about what has happened in my life and where I go next. In all that I look at I have been able to see God's work in my life.

School and University led to a career in IT, developing software and databases. I took a break from that as I raised my two sons, then returned to similar work. The IT work varied and gave me experience in many different fields of work including the business world, administration and medical research. Plus, of course, the opportunity to build up wide experience in IT.

Throughout my life I had been involved in my local church, most notably in Bicester where most of my adult married life has been. When I looked at my faith journey, I felt I was still at primary school level. I started to attend courses which trainee Readers were required to do. I began to feel that God was calling me to something and after much thought and prayer I was selected for Reader training and was licensed just 20 years ago.

I had the opportunity to minister in my local parish and in other churches in the Deanery; but I still felt that God was calling me to something else.

Unexpectedly, I had the opportunity to visit Kenya for a week working with the Church Army college in Nairobi. That was an amazing experience and led me to go as a missionary to Tanzania. It was meant to be for one year, but I stayed for seven. When I went to Tanzania, I knew that God was calling me to do that. Everything fell into place smoothly. I was an IT Consultant and the Anglican Church of Tanzania wanted someone to help them to start using computers in the Provincial and Diocesan offices, and later wanted someone to set up the computer facilities in their new University.

All that I had experienced in my work in the UK equipped me for the work in Tanzania. My training as a Reader enabled me to become involved in the Church and gave me a wonderful opportunity to really get to know the church and the people of Tanzania. I was inspired by that experience then and remain so. It was a great privilege to share in the life of Tanzania. God was at work throughout.

On my return home, I soon became involved in my local church using my training as a lay minister and being informed by what God had worked in me both in Tanzania and in my previous career. Several return visits to Tanzania enabled a simple link between the parishes of friends in Tanzania and my home parish. On my last visit earlier this year I brought home several gifts for my Bicester parish from the parishes which I visited in Tanzania. The giving is not just one way.

God's call on my life was changing as I became involved with ministry to the elderly and funeral ministry.

At this time, I became involved with Cursillo; that involvement was enabled by skills that I had developed in this country and in Tanzania. It also gave me a group of people, in the Group Reunion, with whom I could share my continuing journey.

My family made few demands on me as both sons were pursuing their own relationships and careers.

All seemed settled. Bicester had been my home for 44 years, the place where I started my career, raised my family and which was a centre of my church life. It was the place where I was known and had made many friends.

Then earlier this year a number of factors indicated that I needed to make a move. The move went amazingly smoothly. My house was sold at the asking price within a week of its being advertised. I found an ideal new home within days of the offer on my house. God was at work again.

I have now moved from a town into a large village, the whole scene is different. The only people who I already know are my son and his immediate family.

I have moved from a busy parish church with strong links with the town and in an active team of five churches to a group of three village churches. With the change of parish and diocese I must wait for six months before I can hope to be licensed as a Lay Minister.

In my family life I am now a grandmother and living in the same village as the son who has become a father.

My involvement with things Tanzanian remains but my actual activities will change as I work from a very different base.

We are all called by God to do something and I know that his call will vary from one person to another. What my move has made me realise is that at different times in our lives God calls us to something different. There is indeed a time for one thing and a time for another.

I am convinced that God has guided me to make this move as much as he guided me into the Tanzanian adventure, my ministry in Bicester and all that came before Tanzania. I now have time to think, to look at my priorities, to pray for God's guidance in whatever I might be called to in my new home and parish..... and to learn how to be a grandmother!

Keeping a spiritual journal



If you are a Cursillista who is in regular spiritual direction you are probably familiar with the use of a spiritual journal, but others may not have come across it as a possible tool for your spiritual journey and prayer life.

I have been meeting with a spiritual director for about a year and she encouraged me to start journaling from early on in our sessions. I have found it a very helpful way of documenting my reactions to events in my daily life, my thoughts and feelings, doubts and questions, for my own reflection and prayer, or sometimes as a resource for later discussion. It has helped me too in being aware of God's presence in my life, being more attentive and making time to look back, process and move on. I also use it to note down helpful or inspiring passages from books or bible verses I have read, and I sometimes include postcards of artworks I have enjoyed or photos, maybe articles or special service sheets.

I like writing so it has not been difficult for me, but there is no reason why a journal shouldn't be made up of drawings, paintings, photos or craftwork; whichever means of expression you prefer or find helpful. A journal isn't just about noting the good things that happen to you; it is a great way of privately venting frustration, anger, hurt, or disappointment for instance, or any other emotion you want to express. It also doesn't have to be a carefully written and correctly spelled special notebook; some people journal using their phone or laptop. It is your journal, personal to you and for your eyes only. It is not necessarily a diary that has to be kept on a daily basis; you can add to it as and when you want, but preferably by setting aside time on a regular basis.

David Lawrence has summed it up very well: "A spiritual journal is an ordinary, honest record of what is going on in your life, how you feel about it and your awareness of where God is in it all.....It is a record, which aids reflection and thus becomes a means of responding to God's call to deepening discipleship". This quotation is taken from his article, Keeping a Spiritual Journal: www.methodist.org.uk/media/5027/dd-explore-devotion-keeping-a-spiritual-journal-0313.pdf

If you're not already journaling, why not give it a try!

Barbara Essam

Editor's interview

Lisa's long road towards ordination

Q: Where did you grow up, and did you have a Christian upbringing?

A: I grew up in West Bromwich in the Birmingham area. No-one in my family was a Christian, but as a child I went to Sunday School regularly with a neighbour's child. I had always believed in God, but did not go to church until I got older.

Q: You were in the Royal Air Force for many years. When did you feel God calling you to leave and seek ordination?

A: I joined the RAF when I was 19 and became a telecommunications manager, serving at various units, ending up at RAF Halton and then High Wycombe. During that time I lived with my partner in Aylesbury. We broke up and I fell into depression, even feeling suicidal at times. But one day I felt I wanted to go to church. I told one of my neighbours and she took me with her to Winslow Vineyard Church where I had an amazing feeling of being held by the Holy Spirit. I knew it was God coming into my life, and I went regularly to Sunday services. After six months I saw an Alpha Course was being held at the Church of the Holy Spirit at Bedgrove in Aylesbury. I did that and began worshipping there. I began to feel I was being called by God to be a priest, but as a new Christian I thought it was just me being spiritually hungry!

Q: How did you become involved with Cursillo?

A: I spoke to a curate at the Church of the Holy Spirit who told me about a vocations course at Oxford which I did, and during this time I went on Cursillo Weekend #14 sponsored by Marie Carey whose house group I attended in Aylesbury. It was an amazing weekend and it confirmed me in my idea of becoming a Vicar. It gave me confidence to contact the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) in the RAF and she told me I had to decide what part of the church I wanted to be with. I chose the Anglican Church because of my involvement with the Holy Spirit Church – I felt that church was calling me and I got very much more involved, working with children and taking part in services.



Q: A big change came to you 2016 - you were posted abroad. Where did you go?

A: I was sent to the Falklands for six months. When I was given two weeks leave I decided to do "work experience" at the Anglican Cathedral in Stanley. I was able to live in the Rectory. I took part in all the services, leading one and also gave my first sermon – I was so nervous! But it all confirmed in me my wish to be an ordinand. When I got back to Britain in 2017 I gave the required year's notice to the RAF.

Q: What was your next step?

A: The DDO sent me to Lambeth for an interview with the Bishop for the Armed Services. But he felt I was not yet ready for ordination training. Afterwards I sat on a seat overlooking the Thames, feeling really dejected. I was numb. Should I take back my notice and stay in the RAF?

Q: After such a big disappointment What did you do?

A: I looked for a job! On our re-settlement site I saw a job for a teaching assistant at Aylesbury Young Offender Institution, mentoring long term prisoners. At that time I was mentoring RAF Trainees. I got the job and found it very fulfilling. Some of the prisoners had bad attitudes towards education, they did not see the point of it. They had not done well at school, some came from criminal family backgrounds. But when they passed their exams and got their certificates for Maths and English they were so delighted.

I have since applied for a job at two prisons in Grendon Underwood - Grendon Prison and Springhill, where prisoners go towards the end of their sentences, so a very different situation from Aylesbury. I got the job and start shortly.

Q: What next?

A: I carried on with my studying, and taking on roles at the Church of the Holy Spirit – I was on the Parochial Church Council – and helping at services and in the café. I am also a "street angel in Aylesbury, working one night a month, helping people in difficulty after a night out. In the meantime I had transferred to the Oxford Diocesan Director of Ordinands. When she felt it was the right time she got me an interview with the Bishop of Buckingham, the Right Rev Alan Wilson to see if I was now ready to go before the three-day interview panel at Shallowford, Staffordshire, which recommends applicants for ordination training. I was overjoyed to be told that he would sponsor me!

Going before the panel was very full-on – a bit like a Cursillo Weekend! There were lots of presentations as well as three interviews. I felt I had not done very well at one of them and resigned myself to failure, so I loosened up for the last one, and did better. Waiting for the decision was the longest week in my life – but I was accepted!

Q: When do you start your ordination training?

A: In late September. I am looking at two colleges, Trinity, Bristol, and Wycliffe in Oxford. In the meantime I will continue in my job with prisoners, I have a lot of studying to prepare for my course, I will carry on with my roles in my church, and also meeting my Cursillo friends at group reunions. It is good to have their support and prayers.

Cursillo GB National Ultreya 2020

hosted jointly by

the Dioceses of Southwark and London

Saturday 5th September 2020



10.00 **Walk of Witness from the steps of St Paul's Cathedral over the Millennium Bridge to Southwark Cathedral.**

11.00 **Ultreya in Southwark Cathedral**

2.00 **Eucharist and commissioning of new BACC President**

London is split into two dioceses: south of the river is Southwark, overseen by Bishop Christopher Chessun; north of the river is London, overseen by Bishop Sarah Mullally. The London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace is situated in Southwark diocese while London Diocese is home to St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.

The National Ultreya will begin with a Walk of Witness from the steps of St Paul's, down to the river Thames and across the Millennium Bridge towards Tate Modern, then along the South Bank passing Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and the Golden Hind en-route to Southwark Cathedral.

It's going to be a fabulous day and the Walk of Witness will be a sight to behold. Refreshments will be available at both cathedrals. Bring your own lunch or buy food from all parts of the world at London Borough Market just a few yards from Southwark Cathedral.

No formal evening entertainment is planned but, if enough folk express an interest, an early evening boat trip along the Thames and a guided tour of the Globe Theatre may be arranged. Equally no accommodation has been arranged but there is, of course, a wide range of options in and around London.

As always, the National Ultreya is free to attend but you need to register so that we know how many are coming. Please go to Southwark Cursillo's website to register.

<https://www.southwarkcursillo.org/register-ultreya-gb-2020>

COVID-19 update from Trevor King, Cursillo National President

We are hoping and praying that life will be back to normal by September so that the London National Ultreya can go ahead as planned. The BACC AGM, due in May, has had to be postponed and will now be held at 7.00pm on Friday 4th September at St Paul's Church Hall, Marylebone. Trevor King, BACC National President, is staying in post until then and it is intended that his successor, Beth Roberts, will be commissioned during the Eucharist in Southwark Cathedral by one of the Bishops present.

Dates for your diary

National Ultreya in London

September 5, 2020

See page 13

New Cursillistas please note:

The Welcome Ultreya planned for you on Saturday, April 25 at St Mary's Church, Kidlington has been postponed.

A new date will be arranged.

Until then it is hoped you can join a local reunion group via a visual communication system.

Cursillo Leaders' Workshop

October 9 -11, 2020

Shepherd's Dene, Northumberland.

Further information from:

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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 10th, 2020.

Please contact me with ideas for articles well before this date.

Telephone 01296 655342

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treasurer@oxfordcursillo.co.uk

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