



The magazine of The British Anglican Cursillo® Council

Spiritual Director, Rev Stephen Bowring

New beginnings after challenge of Covid



Well, here we are – approaching the 2023 AGM of the British Anglican Cursillo Council, and the time that I hand over the baton as your National Spiritual Director. It's been an unique period of time, and one that became extended by a year due to the pandemic so that my three-year tenure has actually lasted for four years.

Covid 19 brought with it many challenges in so many ways. As a Cursillo community we had to explore new ways of being and doing what we are and what we do. Given that our fundamental message revolves around group activities and mutual support, this was very hard and disorientating. I know the challenge has been too great for some of us, and we are struggling to regain any sort of normality in our human relationships. More than one diocese has reached the point of no return, and many others are finding it difficult to encourage Cursillistas to be active in their fourth day servant communities.

However, the news is not all bad! Some dioceses have bounced back into renewed growth, and at least two to my knowledge presently have a waiting list of would-be pilgrims because their next weekends are fully booked. Then, of course, there is the remarkable way that so many of us have embraced (however unwillingly!) new technology that has opened up new opportunities and channels of communication that we would have never otherwise have entertained. One of the perennial problems of fourth day activities is the way that we are all geographically spread out: raising enthusiasm for a diocesan Ultreya 30 miles away on a foggy and cold winter's evening is always difficult. "Zoom" and other platforms give us a way to eliminate the problem altogether, and I know we are all looking at how we can balance the use of these with "real" meetings as we go forward.

It has been a huge privilege to serve as NSD through this challenging period, and to meet – both actually and virtually – with so many Cursillistas up and down the UK, sharing your joys and sorrows, and trying to help address some of your problems. It has been enormously rewarding to be centrally involved in growing 'fresh expressions' of Cursillo, and to see these ideas flourishing in practice. I do hope that every diocese and province will be encouraged in the future to 'look over the fence' and see what their neighbours are up to and see whether they might pick up ideas from others. As part of that, as I have said many times before, I do think that every staff team on any Cursillo will benefit greatly from having at least one if not two folks from outside your own area. This is a double benefit in that the visiting staff bring ideas from their own place and also take

ideas back home with them. Not only that, but participants get to see something of the fact that the fourth day community isn't restricted to a local context, but is truly a widespread phenomenon.

As I return to the 'back benches' I am so pleased to hand over the reins to Sharon, who I know will bring many gifts to the role. She and I have worked together in the past, and I know she has a huge heart for Cursillo and considerable experience. So much has been achieved in recent years, but there is still so much to do.

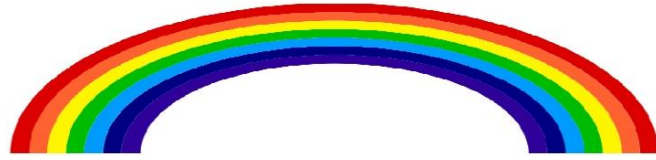
Ultreya!

Stephen



We welcome to the Rev Sharon Guest who will succeed Stephen as our Spiritual Director





Book early to avoid disappointment

A well-known phrase which I have always tended to treat with a degree of scepticism, but in the case of a Cursillo Leaders' Workshop it is a truth which needs to be underlined!

In a post Covid Pandemic era we have as a nation stopped planning ahead, perhaps for fear of being disappointed, lest our hopes are dashed when the event we have been looking forward to is cancelled or circumstance conspires to prevent us attending it. Whatever the reason we have become a nation of late bookers!

Understandable, but a strategy that is not without its consequences! We recently had to cancel a Cursillo Leaders' Workshop due to a limited number of bookings. The event was unviable without a minimum cohort so as to ensure attendees get the best possible experience and benefit. Having cancelled the weekend, it was frustrating to hear a number of people express disappointment as they had been planning to come but had not yet booked!

So, I am writing this article, not only to extol the virtues of the Cursillo Leaders' Workshop but to ask that if you plan to attend, you book early to avoid disappointment!

Adrian

Adrian Trotter

CLW Administrator in waiting...

The next CLW weekend is being held on the **20 October 2023 to 22 October 2023** at Wistaston Hall, Crewe, CW2 8JS.

The CLW is for all who want to know more about Cursillo, lay or ordained. Those taking on a particular leadership role within Cursillo should certainly attend before, or as soon as possible after taking up a new office. CLWs run from 5.30pm on the Friday evening to around 2pm on Sunday. The full cost of the weekend is £200 which includes board and room. A £60 per person non-returnable deposit is required on booking. The balance is due one month before the weekend. It is recommended that private holiday insurance is obtained. Please send application forms to Angela Smith (see below for contact details).

CLW Administrator: Angela Smith

Email: clwadmin@anglicancursillo.org.uk

Tel: 01666 837478

CLW Convenor (from the AGM May 2023): Adrian Trotter

Email: clw@anglicancursillo.org.uk

Tel: 07721 562404

A message of encouragement

from our president, Beth Roberts



As the sun is warming the earth again, we look forward to the warmth of yet more fellowship in group reunions, Ultreya and the even the AGM and later in the year the Ultreya GB. I hope groups are now able to meet face to face more often and able to enjoy each other's company.

We necessarily re-arranged the AGM since the King's coronation clearly takes precedence on our planned date. Whichever date we moved to it would have clashed with some pre-arranged diocesan events, but we trust that all dioceses will still be able to have at least one representative at the meeting to share in fellowship and encourage each other and be able to keep the dioceses informed of BACC and other dioceses' activity.

We will be saying farewell to Reverend Stephen Bowring as he stands down after 4 years as NSD. We will pass on our thanks for his dedication and all he has done over that time. I am aware of many dioceses that have reason to appreciate his commitment. We will also welcome Reverend Sharon Guest from Chelmsford Cursillo as she starts in her new role as National Spiritual Director. She and other new officers will be commissioned during the eucharist.

This year's AGM is also planned to provide an update of our new website which, having seen the draft version I can thoroughly recommend it. Do take a look but be aware that some areas are still under development. Anglicancursillo.uk. This has been a long time in development as many different ideas were researched but my personal thanks go to both Steven Ridley our webmaster and NSD Stephen for his support and assistance in the generation of this version.

Plans are moving towards this year's Ultreya GB organised by a small group in Canterbury and Rochester dioceses as we plan to meet at Rochester cathedral on the 2nd September. Please keep an eye on the website for notice of the bookings being open for this event as the numbers are restricted and tickets (free) will need to be booked.

If you've not experienced an Ultreya GB then do consider journeying to join us, perhaps reading the following article will inspire you as last September we had a very successful day in London & Southwark dioceses. There were about 225 people attending representing 25 dioceses. About 150 joined the colourful walk of witness from St Paul's, across the Millennium bridge (with 17 Cursillo colourful banners causing some interest and many smiles) to Southwark Cathedral. Both dioceses provided a wonderful welcome.

There is so much to look forward to.

Ultreya!

My first experience of a national Ultreya will certainly not be my last, *says Sasha Levy*

Ultreya GB 2022, London and Southwark

After much anticipation and delay it was finally happening and in my home town! Following the glorious sunshine of August the weather had turned slightly autumnal on this the first Saturday in September when rain threatened so I packed my broly and set off in the direction of St Paul's Cathedral. On the approach to the cathedral the main road was closed for filming and for a brief moment I wondered whether the London and Southwark planning committee had arranged to film the event. Alas, not so, as I was redirected around the back streets where I met two of my Cursillista friends and we continued on together to St Paul's.



There we met up with a number Cursillistas from all over GB and I got my first glimpse of some of the colourful banners, there was already a buzz around the steps of St Paul's and we had not yet gone in. We gathered excitedly in the cathedral where we were all welcomed, we prayed and sang hymns before being blessed by the Bishop of London Dame Sarah Mullally and sent on our way

During the service I was sitting next to one of our Southwark flag bearers and somehow ended up at the front of the procession amongst the National, London and Southwark Cursillo banners. As we marched there were shouts of Ultreya! We sang numerous rounds of We Are Marching In The Light Of God and each time I looked back I could see a sea of happy chatty faces amongst the glorious display of the numerous banners representing the various dioceses in attendance.

The rain held off, the weather was fantastic and in what seems like no time at all we arrived at Southwark Cathedral where we were warmly greeted and chatted among the people we knew and had just met. After the introductions and floating group reunions we were spoiled with not one but two awesome witness talks given by Melanie Nazareth and Monica Bolley, followed by a very fitting response from our National Spiritual Director, Rev Stephen Bowring.

By now I was feeling quite fired up, briefly being taken back to my weekend. The break for lunch and a wander around the familiar Borough Market with its unique buzz, people and eateries brought me back to the present for a short while. The sermon given by Bishop Rob Wickham took me again back to my weekend and reminded me how I felt about making a difference and not waiting for someone else to do something that needs to be done or what God is calling me to do.

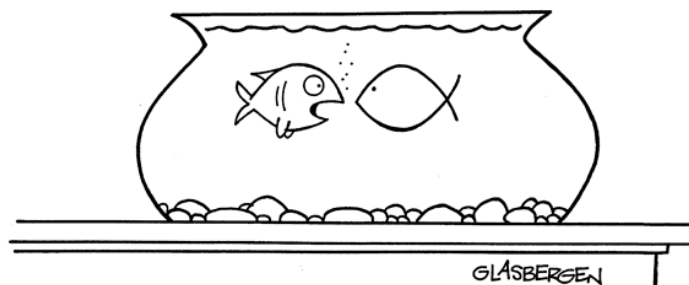


I've been a Cursillistas now for 13 years and I am not quite sure why it has taken me so long to attend a National Ultreya. But of one thing I am sure - this will not be my last!

Ultreya! **Sasha Levy**

For the opportunity of revisiting the amazing witness talks at Ultreya GB 2022 please go to the new website.

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“Can’t we talk about something besides religion for a change?”

Chester Cursillo Thinks Afresh

Last autumn I joined a great weekend at Foxhill, where 26 Cursillistas from Chester (and Lichfield) dioceses worked hard at re-thinking our future direction.

It all started when a group of us went on a Cursillo Leaders' Workshop,, where we were encouraged to think more about the importance of the 4th Day Community. We got excited about a vision of Cursillo in which the Weekend was not the 'be all and end all', but the beginning of a long-term commitment to deepening Christian discipleship, within the context of the 4th. Day Community.

This was particularly timely because we were aware that the Covid lockdowns had significantly weakened some parts of our 4th. Day Community. We had a weekend booked at Foxhill, but we knew that we might struggle to find both staff and participants. So, it seemed "good to the Holy Spirit and us" to use the already-booked weekend to strengthen and re-vitalise our 4th. Day Community.

So, we planned a Weekend like no other. Yes, there would be talks and table discussions, worship and meditations, palanca, parties and talent shows. But no Gofers, no participants, no Festival of Light, no Wake-up. The talks were about different aspects of Chester Cursillo life, with a renewed emphasis on the importance and work of the 4th. Day Community. We built on the idea of a "Servant Community": Cursillistas, involved in the 4th. Day, who were ready to serve in different teams in different ways. One team might support a Secretariat member (e.g. helping and shadowing the Weekend Co-ordinator). Another team might help the 4th. Day Officer in the task of nurturing the 4th. Day Community. Another team might develop and support Sponsors. The overall vision was that the Servant Community would be involved behind the scenes throughout a participant's journey – from before their Weekend, through their Weekend, and on into integration into the 4th. Day Community.

Well, we filled up lots of flipchart sheets with ideas, comments and reflections. Now the Secretariat has to weigh it all, and see where God is leading us. So, watch this space. I don't know what the outcome will be, but I'm sure that, just from what God did amongst us at the Weekend, the Servant Community has an identity and a vision which it didn't have before. And we are all the richer for that.

Rev Tony Rablen
SD Chester Cursillo



Prayer, study, and lots of action brought help to a Ukrainian family

I want to tell you a story about how a Lent group discussion established a little miracle. At the start of Lent last year a group of Christians, including six Cursillistas, met on Zoom to study and pray. It was an ordinary session, nothing special about the content. However we were being taken over by compassion and determination to do something when we realised we had a resource that would be vacant very soon. The Rector was packing, getting ready to leave the parish.

The Ukraine War had just started and the Government Homes for Ukraine Scheme had begun. The group became inspired through their discussions to start a project to persuade their Diocese to allow the rectory to be a refuge for Ukrainian Refugees. The local community were asked to be involved. A marketing agent and the Chair of the Village Hall were amongst the first to sign up. Diana was given flowers on



the first anniversary of the war.

The Diocese worked extremely hard to sort out the legal arrangements. Donations of furniture, soft furnishings, beds and bedding, new kitchen appliances from various companies, were all donated. To cut a long story short, a Ukrainian couple with five children arrived to live in the rectory on May 19th 2022. We had pledges from about 70 people to support their living for up to two years.

Rectories in the Church of England are for Church Ministers and their dependents. The “icing on the cake” was that our Lord had selected a Christian Ukrainian family with both parents sent by their missionary organisation called “Ukraine for Christ”. The couple, Alex and Diana Horai both work online for this organisation. They teach teachers working for Ukrainian schools.

Alex took a trip to Ukraine for one week to visit the teachers recently. Diana has written a message to the Sponsors recently, along with photos of some of the people they work with.

The Holy Spirit goes on building up our church. We are hoping for some members to attend a Cursillo Weekend in June. However, as important as that is, we are also hoping to develop our study groups into more “Prayer, Study and Action”.

Linda Tucker

Southall & Nottinghamshire



Alex writes:

“Dear friends, we sincerely thank you for your prayer and financial support. For faithfulness to God in fulfilling the Great Commission! Appreciate infinitely! Thank God for each of you!

Prayer needs:

- 1. For the victory of Ukraine!*
- 2. For God's protection for the families of teachers and missionaries!*
- 3. For new students who multiply!*
- 4. For the opportunity for Oleksandr to fly to Ukraine for Easter. Device with affordable tickets and in the organisation of festive meetings.”*

If anyone wishes to support Alex in his Ukrainian contacts then please contact him: Tel 07980019929

Dates of next BACC meetings:

- Standing Committee – Fri 1st Sep, Rochester/Canterbury
- **Ultreya GB – Sat 2nd Sep, Rochester/Canterbury**
- Standing Committee – Fri 3rd Nov (by Zoom)
- **Full Council meeting – Sat 4th Nov (by Zoom)**
- Standing Committee – Sat 24th Feb 2024, (TBC)
- **Conference (with AGM on the Sat) – Fri 10-12th May 2024, The Hayes Swanwick, Derbyshire**

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Editor: Beth Roberts

Compiler: Vivien Leeming

Thank you to all our contributors for this issue.

Deadline for our next issue: 29th September 2023

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.

Email: president@anglicancursillo.co.uk

Post: 11, Maisterson Court, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5TZ

Phone: 07703 126163

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Contacts

National President: Beth Roberts
president@anglicancursillo.org.uk

National Spiritual Director: Rev Sharon Guest
From AGM 13th May 2023 nsd@anglicancursillo.org.uk

BACC Secretary: Paddy Gascoigne
secretary@anglicancursillo.org.uk

BACC Treasurer: Beth Gascoigne
treasurer@anglicancursillo.org.uk

CLW Convenor: Adrian Trotter
From AGM 13th May 2023 clw@anglicancursillo.org.uk

Resources Officer: Rev Canon Tony Tucker
resources@anglicancursillo.org.uk