

Message from our president Helen Taubman

Finding officers and developing our Fourth Day reunions are vital to growing Cursillo



As I drive along the countryside locally and marvel at the daffodils, crocus and what is left of the snowdrops, on the verges, I marvel again at the world our God has freely given to us. I cannot believe that it has been almost a year since I was installed as British Anglican Cursillo President and have been busy getting to grips with the tasks the Standing Committee is charged with undertaking in an ongoing manner, in order to guide and nurture Cursillo across the country.

I was on the Standing Committee previously from around 2010 to 2016 and I really enjoyed contributing to the development and growth from an overarching umbrella viewpoint. I learned so much more about Cursillo from this perspective than I had experienced at a diocesan level. I benefited significantly from this. As we approach our AGM 2025 several posts need to be filled as officers reach their 3 years term of service and I urge you to consider if you or anyone you know, would be a suitable fit.

There is a separate article in BACC Pages, outlining what these roles and positions are, and I would encourage you to pray and search your heart whether God is calling you to deepen your knowledge and faith through such service on our BACC Standing Committee. It is time- limited but some people choose to extend by choice because they are gaining so much. These are such crucial positions for the life and health of Cursillo.

I know that there are, from time to time, similar patterns occurring in dioceses, running on skeleton secretariats, or officers renewing their roles time and time again. The standing committee has seen a similar pattern for some roles, however, we strive to ensure these roles are limited to the three- year period.

In maintaining and developing the structure, BACC is the glue which holds British Anglican Cursillo together. I would urge every diocesan secretariat to explore their own Cursillo community for anyone you feel could be

ready to take on such a role. I am still aiming to help ensure that authentic Cursillo and 4th day first are a priority for every secretariat. If we get our Fourth Day into a healthy position, the rest tends to fall into place.

I have heard, so many times, dioceses measuring their health by the number of pilgrims attending The Cursillo (weekend). Whilst this may be commendable, it is often the case that quality over quantity is just as important for the healthy development of the 4th day community.

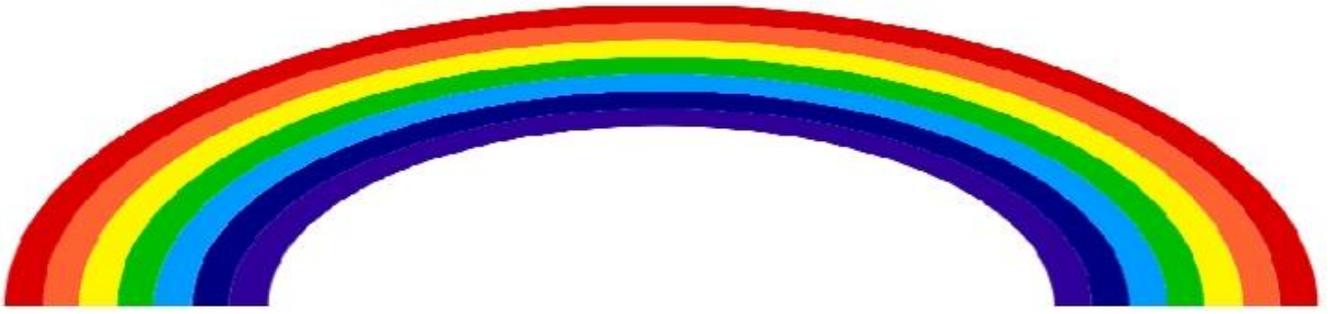
If most pilgrims join a small group and meet regularly to support each other's faith journey –that is a positive outcome. If two or three out of a handful of pilgrims go on to take active roles on the secretariat moving forward –that is a positive outcome. If one or two go on to develop their leadership within their own churches –that is a positive outcome. If the odd one goes off to witness to the Lord by travelling far and wide giving away bibles and spreading the Gospel – that is a positive outcome.

I know that this throws up challenges but it is the only way for Cursillo to grow, thrive and make a positive impact upon the church communities we are populating. I have, over the years, experienced the leadership style of at least five presidents, all of whom have brought gifts and skills to the role, each of us having different gifts. It is the same for every section of the Cursillo Movement. If you have a skill, develop it. Use your Small Group and Ultreyas to support you as you do so. Think positively about taking that a stage further in joining the standing committee and widening your knowledge of Cursillo.

Ultreya!

Helen





Cursillo can change us

***As an ordained minister, Jane Atkins shares how
it can make ordinary Christians into
extraordinary followers of Christ***

I have been involved in Cursillo for over 30 years. For me, it is the most important thing I do as a Christian and as a Priest. Not all the time and not every day, but I always make sure that, at times, it takes priority over almost everything else.

It is important to me because Cursillo is the best tool I have ever come across to make extraordinary, committed and useful Christians out of people who would normally be satisfied with being 'ordinary' Christians. It teaches us that servant ministry is more important than anything else. Whether we are called to arrange the flowers, lead worship, wash the floors, man the food bank - wherever and whenever we have our ministry, we are called to serve Christ and other people in love.

I have seen the difference Cursillo can make to people. Indeed, I found my calling to ordained ministry many years ago during a Cursillo weekend. Others have discovered their calling to lead Mothers' Union, to begin Messy Church, to volunteer at a food bank, or start a weekly provision of hot meals for the elderly, and indeed there are too many discoveries of ministry to mention here.

The Cursillo course itself consists of a structured weekend programme of prayer, worship, study, music, fun activities, fellowship, love, support (and very yummy food)..... and all in an ethos of total confidentiality. Our time together is surrounded and supported with prayer from people all over the country and, indeed, all over the world. This enables us to look again at our faith and this strengthens us in our knowledge and experience of God's love. This newfound strength will then help us to be more effective Christians as we return to our Parish Church.

I completely understand that, as Clergy, we have to be wary of all calls to our congregations from outside of our control, but I would strongly urge you to attend a weekend yourself before asking your lay people to

attend. Contact your local Cursillo Spiritual Director, who will be a local member of your clergy and you will not be disappointed. We look forward to meeting you.



Serving on team in ‘God’s Own Country.’

Victoria Button - an enriching experience

helping on a Cursillo Weekend in another diocese

I initially wrote my reflections for the lovely Rev David in Wales after serving on Team in the St David’s area. I would like to share this experience more widely to encourage others to think about service in another diocese –I can thoroughly recommend it. . .

All too often my experiences blend into the next as the result of being a busy person who takes on lots of activities! So having been given the opportunity to reflect on my time whilst serving on the team at the Cursillo weekend in St David’s, Swansea and Brecon in September it has been illuminating to say the least. The opportunity to serve on team presented itself when I attended a Standing Committee and spoke to Poppy, the LD for the weekend

The adventure began as I waited in the rain for the pilgrims to arrive I met with the absolutely awesome Anna, the woman who had marched camels up to the Cathedral for Christmas! I had already been encouraged by

her earlier in the day as I made my journey into what she described as God's own country - I had travelled from Teesdale in Durham, past the Lake District in Cumbria and through Wales. When I reached Brecon and Llangasty Retreat House, such a beautiful place. Helping the team get things ready was good fun before settling into a lovely service in the crypt chapel before the pilgrims arrived.... the calm before the storm.

Whilst I tried to identify the different species of trees in the grounds, the pilgrims started arriving in various states, some having been lost and exhausted and others just wondering what they had come to. I waited for the weekend to start to do its thing. A programme of events I have seen a few times now, a series of talks and meditations, singing and eating together, praying and reflecting - getting creative and allowing fellowship to be God-centred. Things changed as the pilgrims started to enjoy their time - this always amazes me. It seems that God always turns up for each and of us with special surprise. For me on this weekend it was assisting the Rev David with the service of light and healing. I always feel especially honoured and humbled to be asked to assist in matters I consider very special and holy, and this occasion was no exception. As we prayed for the pilgrims individually in that very sacred space I felt an overwhelming sense of the Holy Spirit's presence, and while I do not know what was being ministered to each participant through us, I felt a sense of incredible healing and strength flow through me. I will cherish that time and the feedback given by the pilgrims confirmed the very special thing God does for us as we seek Him.

There is something quite extraordinary about Cursillo. It seems as if God is using it to wake up His church. The weekends, whether as a pilgrim making their Cursillo or as a member of team, gives us all the tools to be the best disciples for Christ if we want to use them. I have been especially passionate about Cursillo as it is here that I meet like-minded Christians who believe in Apostolic action, who pray earnestly and guide me in what to study.

I love my Fourth Day group who have been so encouraging and grounding. Alongside this however I have to say it is the times when I have gone beyond my comfort zone, gone to places I am not familiar with, and with people I am not familiar with that I have been enriched and fed, spiritually, mentally and physically, more than I can describe.

I really want to encourage anyone who reads this to consider supporting other weekends in other areas. There is great value in sharing our experience and more than anything encouraging others. I have personally gained far more than I have ever put in to attending these weekends and have made new friends that God has chosen for me. I hope to meet some of my new friends again as you are all invited to Durham September 6th 2025 for Utreya GB. I really think it is going to be the best one ever.

Utreya

Victoria Button, Durham #21

Prayer for your Cursillo event

For all Lay rectors out there, planning your Cursillo – please remember to let the Webmaster Stephen, know the date, time and place of your Cursillo, and the name and details of your contact people –Palanca Secretary and Lay Rector in particular.

You will, from this, receive on going prayer, frequently from across the world which is invaluable for your event. In addition, you may receive palanca for the event itself, which can have a powerful impact.

Directory of Priests available to help on team on Cursillo Weekends

Our National Spiritual Director, Rev Sharon Guest, holds a register of volunteer Cursillo priests who are willing to be considered to staff on team for other dioceses than their own. If you are such a priest, willing to travel and serve on other Cursillos, please do let Sharon know. Her details are at the back of BACC Pages

NEEDED URGENTLY

BACC Standing Committee roles which need filling.

If you are interested to learn more about any role, please do ask for more information, without any commitment. There are 4 standing committee meetings per annum which, if you are unable to attend you can update BACC Standing Committee via a written report. At least one meeting is via Zoom. The Autumn meeting is held the day before Ultreya GB in Durham at the same venue.



Area Representatives for BACC Standing Committee - please read proactively

To all Diocesan Secretariats and 4th Day communities -

BACC Standing Committee :Area Representative.

This is an interesting role which collates information and any concerns to be passed from the Diocesan Cursillo Secretariat to BACC and vice versa.

- **Wales and Marches, needed NOW** - This rep would cover (Chester & Lichfield), St Asaph & Bangor, St David's & Swansea and Brecon and also oversight of non-active dioceses as a link person for Hereford, Worcester, Llandaff, & Monmouth: Needed NOW
- **North East and Scotland, needed in May 2025** - This rep would cover Durham, Newcastle and The Scottish Episcopal Church
- **Yorkshire, needed NOW** – This rep would cover Leeds, Sheffield and York.

The following Officer roles for the Standing Committee need filling.

- **Secretary –needed in MAY 2025**
- **Treasurer- needed in MAY 2025**
- **Publicity Officer - needed NOW.**



Great news from Lichfield!

A “Spa” for the soul

Lichfield has been trying to resurrect Cursillo in their diocese for several years. They have made some real strides towards this in recent months.

In January Lichfield and Chester Cursillistas held a ‘Spa Day for the Soul’ open to the Wales and Marches area and where Cursillistas from three dioceses came together at Shallowford House to participate.

We revisited the themes of Grace and Ideals, meditated on the parable of the Prodigal Son and were encouraged to try Praying in Colour. It was a wonderful day of good food, good fun and good fellowship culminating in a shared Eucharist. Thank you to Lichfield Cursillo for organising. We hope that this may encourage other dioceses to work together to organise something similar –it was amazing.

Some participants chose to stay for the weekend and managed to use the extra time in order to hold the inaugural meeting of the Lichfield Cursillo Secretariat. From this meeting roles and responsibilities were set out and agreed and all the key positions were filled. The roles of SD & LD will have to be ratified by the Bishop who is extremely supportive of re-starting Cursillo in the Lichfield Diocese. This is all very good news indeed and another ‘good News’ story to fill us with hope and inspiration. God is good!

Come to Durham!

**Ultreya GB 2025 – an important date for your diary
Saturday 6th September 2025 at Durham.**



6th September 2025 – The Cursillistas of Durham are looking forward to welcoming you to Durham. Here are a few things for you to consider:

Friday 5th Evening – join us for Evensong at Durham Cathedral beginning at 5.30pm followed by a guided tour afterwards (to be booked in advance)

Saturday Ultreya – 9.20am arrival and registration for a 10 am start at Elvet Methodist Church, Durh am.

Eucharist – 2pm start at Durham Cathedral

Durham is only 3 hours from London by train and only 5 minutes from the A1. Durham is easy to get to and a gateway to the North East. Why not make a mini break out of it and visit Holy Island, The Faith Museum and Castle of Bishop Auckland, the historic site of Jarrow or our beautiful coastline? For something a little bit different, there is the option of watching the Pyromusical – **Kynren** – which is performing on Saturday 6th beginning at 7.30pm in Bishop Auckland. It is quite the spectacle!

NB - The Great North Run is taking place the same weekend as the Ultreya, so we recommend that you book accommodation as soon as you can to assure a room, as there will be a high demand in the area. There are a number of hotels in the city, but do also check out Bishop Auckland or Darlington half an hour south. Another option is to contact Durham University to check in at a college. It is central, but it doesn't have parking. Parking is difficult in the city, but there are some Park and Ride options as well as a bus to get you from the station to the Cathedral and back. Walking anywhere in the city involves a hill – be warned! It is a small city but beautifully formed.



Happy memories of Ultreya GB 2024 - Yorkshire

There was a great deal to see and do in Sheffield Cathedral, last year's host venue for the national gathering of British Anglican Cursillo. There were banners galore and, whilst we were unable for health and safety reasons, to march the proposed route, we still made our presence known.

We all gathered in the Wilson Carlisle Centre on the Friday for a social evening with a buffet and quiz. Judging by the noise and laughter a great time was had by all.

As always with the National Ultreya, the event was thought provoking, full of joy, and altogether, a wonderfully spiritually charged occasion for all who attended –well done Yorkshire team.



Friday night
gathering
was just
great!

Easter message from
our Spiritual Director
Rev Sharon Guest



IN CHRIST ALONE.....

As a community of Christians we are on a journey through Lent which will bring us to the last two weeks in Lent known as Passiontide (in the Christian liturgical year) beginning on the Fifth Sunday of Lent, long celebrated as Passion Sunday, and ending on Holy Saturday.

We also belong to the movement of the church known as Cursillo which is also a global journey. We are brothers and sisters in Christ and although we worship in many buildings/counties/nations and countries we are one church and we seek to support and encourage one another on our journey of faith. However, we are not a people who live without hope, our hope is in Christ Alone, and these first two lines from the song with the title In Christ Alone remind us of this:

*In Christ alone, my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song*

Therefore, as we approach Easter we look forward to the great day of resurrection and we remember that Christ died for each and every one of us and that he rose again so that we might have eternal life with Him. Alleluia!

At this time of Easter may our hope be always in Christ alone and I offer this prayer by St. Teresa of Avila to pray in our hearts and minds and be comforted to know that God is the same yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever.

*Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices*

*May your Easter be full of joy with the sure and certain hope we have
in the resurrection of Christ the saviour of the world.
Blessings Rev. Sharon*

THE BIBLE WORKING FOR US

AND FOR GOD, EACH DAY

You will be rewarded

‘When you serve the Lord, you always get back more than you give up. And if you get more back than you give up, have you really sacrificed anything at all? (Romans 8) The only regrets you will have at the end of your life will be that you didn’t seek and serve God more and seek and serve Him sooner’

Personal Growth –commit to it

‘In childhood our bodies automatically grow. But some of us bring into adulthood a subconscious trust that the spiritual, emotional and mental growth follow a comparable pattern. We think that, as time goes by, we inevitably improve. (1Timothy 4) The problem is that you don’t get better by just living; you must be intentional about it. No one improves by chance. Personal growth doesn’t simply take place on its own. And when you are finished with your formal education, you must take full ownership of the growth process because no-one else will see to it for you. The ultimate growth manual is your Bible. It’s ‘living and powerful’ (Hebrews 4:12). Everything you need to know and everything that is required for you to grow, can be found in its pages. So open your Bible. Delve into it. Read it. Meditate on it. Apply its principles to your life and you will be amazed at how you grow.

Special thanks is given to United Christian Broadcasters for their permission to use materials from their daily ‘Word for Today’ – if you have not yet discovered them, it is a consistent source of materials, music, reflections and ongoing items of Christian Interest.

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The UCB Word For Today is written by Bob and Debby Gass.





So many ways to spread the Cursillo message

A wake-up call from our president, Helen Taubman

“Take a handful of Christians who, in their own communities, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with whatever is noble and good”. People who radiate in simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something not seen. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and is very powerful and effective.

For me, taking part in Cursillo gatherings, large or small, is always inspiring. I recently experienced an Ultreya in a venue which would be classed as a non " Cursillo Church" yet at our Ultreya, our Lord was very much in evidence and central in everything that happened that day. The four non Cursillistas who attended were intrigued - seeds were sown. Two of the four were clergy. Such witness can be achieved if we hold our Ultreyas (or indeed, small groups) in places where they do not know about Cursillo.

May I urge remind Cursillistas who have found their everyday responsibilities have overshadowed Cursillo life, to remember the significance we each experienced from our Cursillo and look for ways in which we are able to share this experience and its values with others. Invite someone new into your small group. If you are not yet grouping, commence a new group with non Cursillistas and train them to use the method. Then invite them perhaps to an Ultreya and they may well ultimately want to experience their own Cursillo.

How can we share and spread the Cursillo method and message if we are not prepared to stand up and be counted? In May last year, I was inaugurated as National President of Cursillo. I am no different from any one of you, I have a profound belief of the Cursillo Method being something which the Anglican Church should be using to help people deepen their faith, get to know Jesus better and become disciples.

I always remember a vicar from South Wales at an all Wales Cursillo meet-up in Aberystwyth who said that he had been holding Cursillo groups in his church for many months However, his parishioners were unaware that the structure they were using was the Cursillo method. He was biding his time before he introduced the concept of Cursillo. The method is our cornerstone, our balance for our everyday life. Our small groups and Ultreyas should help us forward plan our work for Christ and be accountable for its progress. Invite people to join you, grow your group and support network and let God do the rest.

TELLING OUR STORIES

Jesus set us a strong example in storytelling, which can be one of the most powerful ways of explaining to others, what Cursillo has meant for us as an individual and how it can help and support priests in their day to day running of the church, and how it can make leaders and disciples of people who are not confident to do so. Whether ordained or laity, please do share your story by sending it to the editor. Here is one such story byHELEN PLEASE INSERT HIS NAME

Turning a disaster into something wonderful!

Reflections from Father Michael Bolley

Wychcroft, the Southwark Diocesan Retreat House, set in the Surrey countryside a few miles from Redhill and not far from the M25 Junction 6, has hosted Cursillo weekends for over 36 years. (I served as Lay Rector of Southwark #3 at Wychcroft in October 1988.)

The house had been booked for Southwark Cursillo #44 in October 2024.

Staff team-building days had taken place, rollos written, everything was ready and it



looked as though we had enough pilgrims for the Weekend to go ahead. Then, just two weeks before it was due to start, came the news that several pilgrims had dropped out, making the Cursillo no longer viable.

It so happened that on that very Thursday morning there was a scheduled meeting between myself (SD of London Anglican Cursillo and Spiritual Adviser for the weekend), Iain Whitlam (Lay Rector) and Libby Bradshaw (Southwark Lay Director) to discuss some details of the worship during the Cursillo. We abandoned our original agenda for the meeting and instead considered how we should respond to this new situation.

Bearing in mind Southwark Cursillo would be obliged to pay a significant sum of money even if the venue wasn't used, we wondered what we could do in the short preparation time available, to make use of the booking. We hoped we could offer a programme to appeal widely to those in Cursillo, bearing in mind the very short notice would make it impossible for many. In the end those who would have been the Staff Team for the Cursillo made up most of those who attended.

We quickly decided that most of all we each needed a real sense of encouragement and spiritual renewal amidst the disappointment of the cancelled Cursillo, the struggles we face in daily life, and the challenges of sustaining church life and Cursillo at the present time. We could also consider the future of the movement.

I took the lead in sketching the outlines of a possible structure. The period from Thursday evening until the end of Friday would be the personal retreat phase, with Saturday celebrating the blessings which Cursillo has brought to us and to the Church, looking at the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the movement now and discerning the way ahead.

For the retreat phase I wanted to find words to capture the theme – what we hoped for those who took part – and which could be used to communicate this clearly in our publicity. What sprang to mind was the phrase, “Renewed in body, mind and soul”.

Fred Kaan’s hymn was very appropriate:

‘Now let us from this table rise renewed in body, mind and soul; with Christ we die and rise again, his selfless love has made us whole.

With minds alert, upheld by grace, to spread the word in speech and deed, we follow in the steps of Christ, at one with all in hope and need.

To fill each human house with love, it is the sacrament of care; the work that Christ began to do we humbly pledge ourselves to share.

Then grant us courage, living God, to choose again the pilgrim way, and help us to accept with joy the challenge of tomorrow’s day.’

The whole Eucharistic hymn speaks powerfully, not only of the renewal we were seeking, but also of the consequences of such renewal: people living out their daily lives as pilgrims following the way of Christ, upheld by grace, renewed in mind as well as body and soul, and engaging in fruitful apostolic action: the Cursillo vision! This personal retreat phase of the weekend seemed to be so beneficial to so many.

Thursday evening was a time of entering into retreat, leaving our daily lives behind and giving ourselves space to encounter God and ourselves anew. On Friday we took most of the time to partake in an Extended Eucharist – the Eucharist divided into a series of phases interspersed with meditations and free time, reflecting, pausing, even engaging in artwork if you wanted!

The anointing with the Oil of Healing was especially powerful. My personal practice is not to stint with the oil and to anoint the palms of both hands as well as the forehead. I used these words from Common Worship:

“ I anoint you in the name of God who gives you life. Receive Christ’s forgiveness, his healing and his love.

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ grant you the riches of his grace, his wholeness and his peace”.

As the weekend drew to a close the feedback we received included phrases such as:

‘Peace’; ‘recharged’; ‘love’; ‘reconnection with God and one another’; ‘thankful’; ‘encouraged’; ‘Inspired’; ‘time for reflection’

“Not only were people renewed in body, mind and soul, their enthusiasm to serve God using the Cursillo method was rekindled and there was a new sense of hopefulness for the future of Cursillo”

We give you thanks, Almighty God, for all the benefits you have given us: you who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen. ULTREYA!

Postscript: I am happy to provide my weekend structure for anyone who would like to do something similar in their own diocese. spiritualdirector@londoncursillo.org.uk

An Ignatian Prayer

Above all, trust in the slow work of God

We are quite naturally impatient in everything

To reach the end without delay

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to something

Unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress

that it is made by passing through

some stages of instability –

and that it may take a very long time.

And so it is with you.

Your ideas mature gradually – let them grow,

Let them shape themselves, without undue haste.

Don't try to force them on,

As though you could be today what time

(that is to say, grace and circumstances

Acting on your own good will)

Will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit

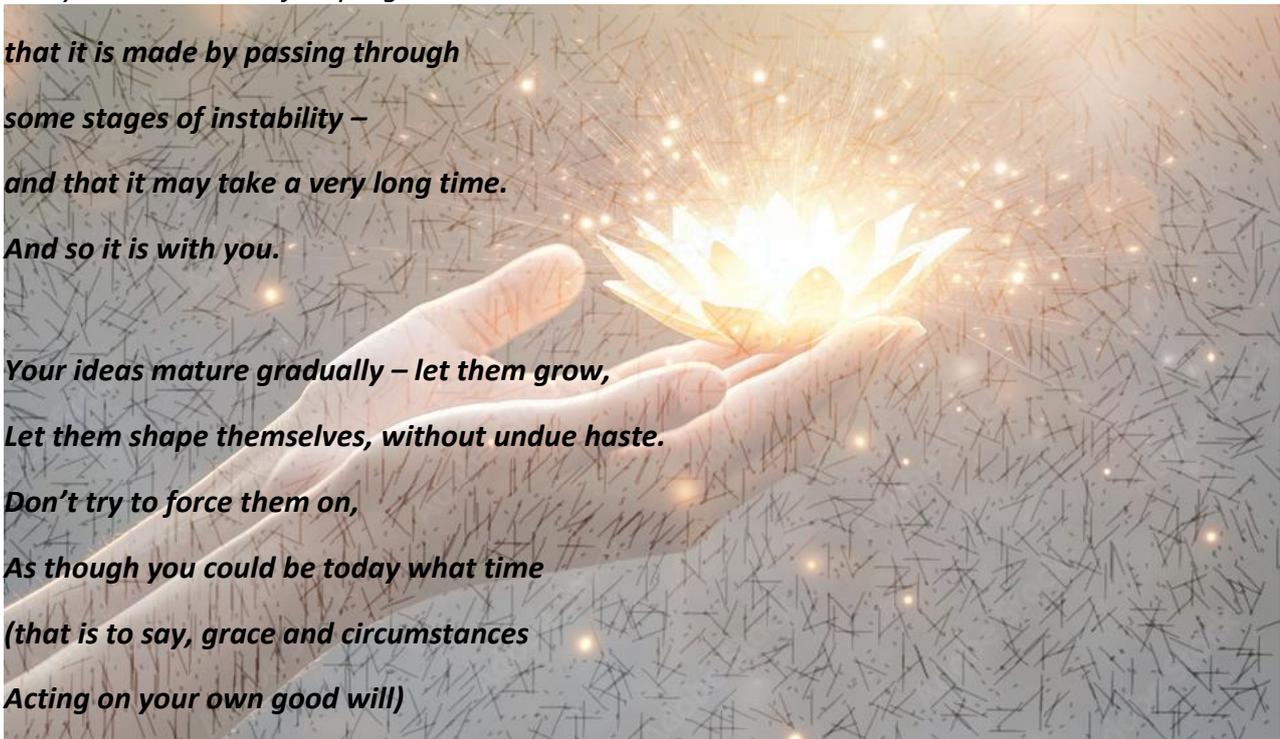
Gradually forming within you will be.

Give our Lord the benefit of believing

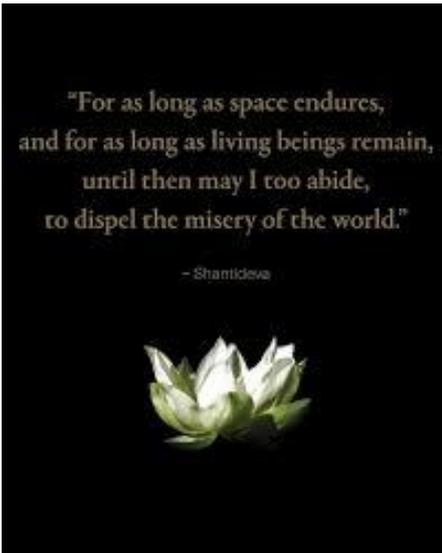
That his hand is leading you

And accept the anxiety of feeling yourself

In suspense and incomplete.



A Buddhist Prayer



May I become at all times, both now and forever,
A protector for those without protection,
A guide for those who have lost their way,
A ship for those with oceans to cross,
A sanctuary for those in danger,
A lamp for those in the dark,
And a servant to all those in need.

As long as living beings exist,
and suffering afflicts them,
May I too abide to dispel the misery of the world.
May I be a guard for those who need protection,
A guide for those on the path,
A boat, a raft, a bridge for those who wish to cross the flood.

May I be a lamp in the darkness,
A resting place for the weary.

This lovely prayer was given to me by a friend.

Helen

Diocesan SDs, LDs & BACC reps are expected at the full council meetings (shown in bold)

MEETINGS

- **Conference (with AGM on the Sat) – Fri May 2025 – Market Harborough**
- Standing Committee – Fri 6th Sep 2024, Sheffield
- Ultreya GB – Sat 7th Sep 2024, Sheffield
- Standing Committee – Fri 1st Nov 2024, by Zoom
- Full Council meeting – Sat 2nd Nov 2024, by Zoom
- Standing Committee – Sat 22nd Feb, venue TBC

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