

# Oxon Fourth



# Oxford Anglican Cursillo

**Issue No 14**

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## Lay Director



It seems incredible that we will have had three weekends at Douai Abbey in November - it seems such a short time since our first one in October 2010. This also means that there will be 32 new Cursillistas which is very encouraging.

The Festival of Prayer at Cuddesdon College, run jointly by the Diocese and the Bible Reading Fellowship, at which Cursillo had been invited to lead a workshop, was an excellent day, despite heavy rain for most of it. We gathered in the Parish Church to be welcomed by Bishop Colin and Olivia Graham, the Parish Development Adviser for the Oxford Archdeaconry, and to hear an address by Ian Adams. Several prayer stations had been set up in the Church which were beautifully presented. Alison Askew and Kevin Beer ran the Cursillo workshops with over 30 people coming to two sessions - Kevin gave a brief history of Cursillo while Alison outlined a Cursillo Weekend following which Victoria Mort, Gilly Robinson and I joined them to give the participants a taste of a group reunion, which seemed to be very successful.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September I joined Alison Askew, Barbara Earl and Anne Moss in Lincoln for GB Ultreya. Accommodation was available at Bishop Grosseteste College, which was very convenient as that was where the Ultreya took place. There were approximately 500 Cursillistas from all over the country, from Exeter to Scotland, Wales to Norfolk. In the afternoon we gathered in the magnificent Cathedral for Eucharist, led by the Bishop of Grimsby with the sermon being delivered by the Most Revd Idris Jones, National Spiritual Director. As always it was a wonderful, uplifting occasion.

When you receive the papers for the AGM please think prayerfully about who you would like to nominate for vacant positions on the Secretariat; if you feel it is something you could offer to do, do not be shy - ask someone to nominate you! I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on 26<sup>th</sup> November.

On a personal note, I am enormously grateful to Matthew Caminer for being Acting Lay Director during my period of ill health and to the rest of the Secretariat who ensured that it was "business as usual".

ULTREYA!

Alison Shaw

## Thursday's Child

My mother was always quoting the old rhyme about the days of the week on which you were born and needless to say I was not terribly impressed. Being born on a Thursday meant that 'I had far to go' and I can remember thinking that only Wednesday's child had a worse deal being full of woe. Now, approaching retirement, or at least a change in the volume and pace of work, I have been drawn to look back over my life and have discovered just how far I've been.



The journey, both outwardly and inwardly has been truly remarkable and there is no way I could have ever envisaged being 'here' now and I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

What I have discovered is that every day of the week from the rhyme is important and everyone shares in each day's prospect. We are all great people loved by a glorious God and filled with his grace and spirit but the life journey can be hard in so many ways and filled with a lot of woe, but it also very worthwhile. Maybe as we get older, nearer the end of the week, is when we begin to understand what it's all about and perhaps this is what the rhyme itself is telling us.

Richard Rohr, the American Franciscan monk, ordained priest and prolific writer, speaks of the 'two halves of life' - the first being the one where we establish ourselves in the world and build our lives; the second is the growing awareness of another way of life where we begin to empty out the things we've acquired in order to discover the real meaning. You will notice that I am a great fan of his writings as he makes me feel more in relationship with God and less of a heretic!

At the end of November I will be stepping down as Spiritual Director for Cursillo in the diocese and I am delighted that Charles Miller will be taking on the role.

It has been a huge privilege, very humbling and also great fun to have been a part of the growth of Cursillo over the past six years but it has always been and needs to continue to be a dynamic movement. New journeys now begin and we all have a long way to go whichever day of the week on which we happen to have been born.

I wish you all every blessing in the future.

*Angela Linton*  
*Spiritual Director*

Towards the end of a Cursillo weekend we are given two cards - one is the beige Group Reunion card and the other is the pale green Rule of Life card. The former we tend to use on a regular basis as the meeting together to reflect on where we are in our relationship and life in Christ is so important whereas the latter can often be left in the drawer unused and the reference to it in the Group Reunion card can be glossed over.

There are several points I should like to make about these cards:

Firstly, they are tools to help us with our faith not things to make us feel guilty.

Secondly, they can be used for individual reflection on a daily or weekly basis as they offer a very **short** and **simple** way of focusing on where we are as disciples and to offer prayer for one another.

Thirdly, it's important not to feel overwhelmed by these great lists of things to do - we're not meant to treat them as 'tick boxes'.

Fourthly, I would encourage you not to sign the rule of life card unless you really feel you want to.

This last point may seem odd so let me explain. In 1995, when I went to a Cursillo weekend, the Group Reunion card also had a promise on it and space to 'sign up' and I did so eagerly but it wasn't long before reality took hold and there was a feeling of being swamped and unable to cope. I understand now that it's far more important to enjoy the life of faith which is just about the best apostolic action there is. Cursillo is a fantastic way of committing to and living in the Holy Spirit and then to keep being supported and encouraged in our faith and to help others in the same way.

Use the tools gently but always seek the love and the joy we have in Jesus Christ.



ULTREYA



## OXFORD # 10

Preparations for Oxford #10 got off to a fine start with a "Feed my Sheep Supper" for the team. I'm not sure if before they arrived the team thought of themselves as the sheep and were expecting only to be fed, but this was not the reason for the choice of theme. Just as in John 21 the words 'Feed my sheep' were an instruction to feed and nurture others, in this case, the guests on Oxford #10.

In Cursillo style, the social evening followed a prayer study and action pattern. I shared a study that I had done, which considered The Lord's Supper as Jesus preparing and equipping the disciples to continue His work after His death. Luke 22 and 1 Corinthians 11 were used as the basis of the study and covered three main points: prepare, share and beware. A few of the ideas covered are included below for your own reflection.

### ***Prepare***

Jesus asked two of his disciples to "Go and make preparations for us" (Luke 22:8). Very humanly they were concerned with practicalities, but Jesus already had it all in hand. Everything was already provided for - "a room which was fully furnished (verse 12). And so it is when *we* are asked to do God's work. He provides what is needed.

### ***Share***

Jesus makes the importance of unity and sharing clear, "Take this and divide it among you" Paul echoes this in 1 Cor 11:33 "So then my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other" The supper is to be a sharing, a demonstration of unity and concern for one another. It is not to be our own individual private suppers but one where everyone can be fed.

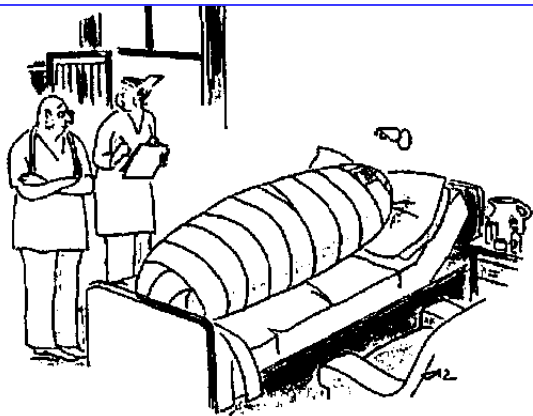
### ***Beware***

When you come together remember it is The Lord's supper you eat. Then remembering whose supper it is, act with appropriate humility. Luke 22:24 details a dispute which arose among them about which of them was the greatest. Jesus' response reminds us that "the greatest among you shall be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves" If in doubt follow His example "I am among you as one who serves."

Ali Askew

Lay Rector Oxford #10





"I have this horrible premonition that he's turning into a butterfly."

## Secrets and Surprises

The Bishop of Oxford often likes to describe Cursillo as "one of God's best kept secrets". I think that anyone who has enjoyed a Cursillo weekend, the regular rhythm of reunion groups or the joy of meeting old friends at ultreyas will know what he means. Secrets are in a way like birthday presents, almost as much fun for the giver as for the receiver, sometimes more so! Years ago, a friend came

home from an exhausting business trip. Although it was his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, what he really wanted most of all was to sleep. He went straight up to his bedroom, and cast a casual look through his bedroom window, only to be confronted by dozens of ecstatic faces screaming 'surprise' at the top of their voices from the back garden. The plotting for the surprise party had been going on for months. Everyone was in the know, with the one proviso: John must not find out! It took nearly an hour for him to be coaxed downstairs to join in the fun.

Cursillo is not a surprise birthday party. It is actually perfectly possible to tell people exactly what happens on a Cursillo weekend, how reunion groups and ultreyas work together, and how it all fits into our spiritual lives, using normal everyday language. That word 'normal' is important. At the risk of seeming a kill-joy, a Cursillo weekend is first and foremost a sequence of fifteen talks, five meditations and daily Eucharist. It is invariably our experience that this time is deeply blessed by the Holy Spirit, and some of those who go on the weekend are changed in a special way. Conversely, when someone asks what happens on a Cursillo weekend and we go all furtive and coyly say: "I can't tell you", there is a real risk that this will turn some people away from Cursillo, never to return.

It is true that some aspects of the approach to presenting the weekend can only really be fully appreciated by being there, and it can be a little hard to describe, because the wonders of God's workings can indeed defy a simple description. Some of the activities have their maximum effect if there is a bit of a surprise element, but that is true of many events, conferences and courses that we have been to. But they are categorically not secrets, and even if the lid is taken off those surprises prematurely, people generally get the point anyway.

Moral of the story: there are no secrets in Cursillo. None at all. There are a few surprises, but they are minor when compared to what the weekend is for and how the Holy Spirit blesses it. And He doesn't need our help for that to happen!



## When I say .... "I am a Christian"



When I say "I am a Christian," I'm not shouting "I'm clean living."  
I'm whispering "I was lost, now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say "I am a Christian," I don't speak of this with pride.  
I'm confessing that I stumble and need Christ to be my guide.

When I say "I am a Christian," I'm not trying to be strong.  
I'm professing that I'm weak and need his strength to carry on.

When I say "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging of success.  
I'm admitting that I've failed and need God to clean my mess.

When I say "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect.  
My flaws are far too visible, but God believes I'm worth it.

When I say "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain.  
I have my share of heartaches so I call upon his name.

When I say "I am a Christian," I'm not holier than thou,  
I'm just a simple sinner who received God's grace somehow!



*Author unknown*



Thank you.....

To all our contributors for this issue of Oxon Fourth.

To continue making this an interesting and empowering publication we would love to hear from anyone who would like to share their experiences of a Cusillo weekend or how their weekend has enabled them to carry out God's work in their community.

Any poems, verses or words of wisdom etc that have inspired you on your faith journey

please send your contributions to me,  
[communications.rep@oxfordcursillo.co.uk](mailto:communications.rep@oxfordcursillo.co.uk)

# Dates for your diary

**22nd October 2011**

## **North Oxon Ultreya**

9:30 Breakfast for 10:00 start

The Chapel, Heyford Park, Upper Heyford OX25 5TE (Just off the J10 M40)

**3rd-6th November 2011**

## **Oxford 10 -**

Douai Abbey

**Saturday 26th November 2011**

## **Ultreya and AGM**

9:15 Breakfast for 10:00 start

Church of the Holy Spirit Cambourne Ave, Bedgrove, Aylesbury HP21 7UE

**26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

## **Oxford 11**

Douai Abbey

We are now in the delightful position that we have a waiting list for Cursillo weekends so if there is anyone that you would like to sponsor please book early.

See [www.oxfordcursillo.co.uk](http://www.oxfordcursillo.co.uk) for the latest updates

**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**

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**Deadline for next issue:** If there is anything you would like to contribute to the next issue of Oxon Fourth, any thoughts, prayers, study recommendations or action tips that you would like to share please send to [communications.rep@oxfordcursillo.co.uk](mailto:communications.rep@oxfordcursillo.co.uk) by the beginning of March 2011