



Our Lay Director, Jan Watts, writes.

As you receive this my greatest wish is that you are all remaining well, both yourselves and your families. These are very strange and uncertain times and we must hold onto our earnest belief that the Lord is ultimately in charge of this wounded world. As Julian of Norwich said:

“All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.”

This has been a really exciting year for Cursillo with an interesting programme of events all over the Diocese and two very successful week-ends. I especially want to thank Di



Davies who took over as Lay Rector of York 28 as Joy Hadley very sadly became ill and had to step down. No one knows until they have done it what a lot of work is involved in being a Lay Rector on a Cursillo week-end, despite a supportive team around you. All of us who have led a week-end have found it such a blessing and so rewarding, but nevertheless a lot of work. Tracey Netherton managed to put on a wonderful second week-end, York 29 despite just having moved jobs and all the training etc. that that involved. So we are deeply in debt to her too.

We had 3 Quiet Days during the year. The second one at Emmanuel Church, Bridlington, was poorly attended but at a time when many had Christmas fairs and other events in their own churches. Hopefully we may try another one there – it was greatly enjoyed by those who did attend and is a lovely venue for such an event. The recent Quiet Day in March at Wydale was a very special occasion with 41 attending on a blustery, bright day and with three excellent meditations from Jonathan spaced out during the day.



We also had a very successful week-end in September when we hosted the BACC Standing Committee and the BACC Council meeting on Friday night and Saturday. There was a wonderful “buzz” amongst so many Cursillistas and many compliments about



the “Yorkshire” refreshments – in other words plenty to eat!!

Amongst our Ultreyas we had one in Saltburn by the Sea. One of the joys of my three years as Lay Director has been to see a strong Group Reunion established in that area and several of the Redcar/Saltburn Cursillistas are hopefully still staffing on the next week-end. It may seem a very long way to go to an event but we are always so warmly welcomed and our distant members so encouraged. One thing I would love to encourage is for Cursillistas to open their homes so for longer journeys people could drive up on Friday, stay the night and then join in Saturday’s event. On October 24th this year there is a Quiet Day planned at Saltburn and it would be wonderful if a large number of us could get there. (Virus permitting)

York 30 has, as you know been cancelled. However, it is hoped that the same team will still be available for 2021 when York 30 is rescheduled for April 30th to May 3rd, the May Day Bank Holiday. When we last put on a week-end at a Bank Holiday we had a number of working people attending who didn’t need to take time off work.

As many of you know I have now served my three years as Lay Director. One of the great strengths of Cursillo is that the posts are time limited – there is no hierarchy and I shall hopefully settle down to the grass roots of York Cursillo again. It has been a huge privilege and joy to take on this role and I am more than ever convinced of the value of Cursillo to all our churches and parishes. So many Cursillistas are doing so many different roles in the name of Christ and this is ever more necessary as clergy are asked to take on more and more responsibilities. We are not a complacent, self-centered organisation but really must continue to see ourselves as a tool of the church.

The Lay Rector’s role is different to the others on the Secretariat in that it is by invitation only and then needs ratifying, in our case by Bishop Alison who is our Diocesan contact. I am delighted to tell you that Wanda Maciuszko has responded to our invitation and after prayerful consideration has agreed to be our next Lay Director. It is a wonderful appointment as Wanda is a fairly new Cursillista. Some of us have been involved in Cursillo since before its start in York Diocese and we can be a little precious about the way things have always been done. We need fresh eyes and fresh ideas to keep us moving forwards and together with the experience that is already on the Secretariat I feel there will be an excellent balance in our leadership. Wanda will officially take over her new post at our AGM, re scheduled for the Autumn but is currently shadowing me and taking on more and more of the role.

Please do say hello to Wanda at future events if you don’t yet know her and do please support her in your prayers as you have done for me.

We shall have other changes on the Secretariat this year, particularly Ruth Bannister who has done one job after another ever since she did her week-end.

We are so indebted to her – in fact her job as 4th day rep. has been so onerous that we have decided to try to appoint a 4th day team to share the work between a few. We do owe you a great deal Ruth and thank you so very much for all you have done. We hope of course to continue to see you at all sorts of Cursillo events. We hope that we might find someone willing to book the Ultreyas and Quiet Days for us, working on an annual programme in conjunction with the Lay Director. Ruth has already done such a programme until the end of this year so anyone taking on that role has a head start. We'd like to also appoint a second person in a pastoral role to keep an eye on our Group Reunions, perhaps visit them occasionally and help to find Group Reunions or start new ones for our new pilgrims. These are the bedrock of Cursillo. The third part of the 4th day role is a newsletter editor and I'm pleased to say that Trevor King has already agreed to do this.

We are also saying goodbye to Elizabeth Charlton who has acted as our secretary despite losing her wonderful husband and with varying health herself. We owe you too a great deal Elizabeth. Unless anyone else is desperate for Elizabeth's job, Margaret James has offered to take over. Thank you so much Margaret.

Lynn Stephenson and Janet Green have very kindly offered to do a further year as membership secretary and Treasurer for which we are more than grateful.

And to all the Secretariat members who I have served with over the three years – my most enormous gratitude. You have been hard working, encouraging, good humoured and supportive of myself and of each other. The leadership of Cursillo is in very safe hands.

And finally an enormous thank you to Jonathan who is to continue as our Spiritual Director for at least another year. It has been inspirational working with him, even if I have occasionally to rein him in a little!– his enthusiasm for Cursillo and what it could do for the church is boundless.

It simply remains for me to thank you all for your loving support and encouragement and I hope to go on seeing you at many future events.

My thoughts and prayers are with you all at this difficult time.

Jan...

P.S. Please put Wydale in your prayers. We have had to postpone our week-end and Wydale have suffered many further cancellations and have also cancelled many of their own events and have asked for prayer at this difficult time. They have been good to us over the years and we hope the period caused by the virus will be brief so that by the end of the year their finances are not greatly affected. Pray for the trustees of Wydale that they would make wise decisions and for Mark and his wife as they steer Wydale through the coming months.



AGM Report by Spiritual Director

I would like to record my thanks to Jan for all she has done to serve the Cursillo movement in the York Diocese as Lay Director. Jan has brought much energy and wisdom to the task which has brought stability and growth. I personally want to say what a pleasure it has been to serve alongside her as Spiritual Director. I would also like to thank all those of the secretariat who have served this year, and I wish to acknowledge the grit and hard work which Ruth has put in as 4th day rep. Her work has provided a firm footing for next year as we adjust into a new season under a new Lay Director. Thank you also to Elizabeth Charlton for her willingness to belong to, and take the minutes at, the secretariat.

This year we will welcome Wanda as Lay Director. One of the strengths of Cursillo is that each office or role is time limited which means new people take on the old roles. Everyone is different so there will be new grace imparted. I am sure everyone will welcome and support Wanda in this new work. She has prayerfully considered this and the Lord has a purpose which will work out in the months ahead. I think the gifts she has will build on all the good things Jan has brought to Cursillo in this diocese. For the time being—until the AGM— Wanda will shadow Jan so we have double the benefit of them both.

This year I have been encouraged by those I have got to know from Saltburn to Hull.; from Hunmanby to York, who have recently joined Cursillo and also attended Ultreyas. Thank you to each one. Thank you too for the many more who continue to bring strength to Cursillo in our diocese by inviting others to join us and contributing so we can invite pilgrims to attend weekends free of charge.

Strategically we are aiming to continue our current plan to allow weekends to be staffed and pilgrims to attend, free of charge. For some years Cursillo was accused of being secretive and in recent years we have taken steps to address this by publicising as best as we can the actual events of a weekend. The other accusation was that Cursillo was only for the rich. This was because people saw that to start the Cursillo journey (by attending a weekend) used to cost them over £200. Now it costs nothing. Making Cursillo truly accessible to all. In addition I would like to see more “Crossover” events where those who are not yet involved in Cursillo can join in with us so they get to know us and be encouraged to belong. Such “Crossover” events currently are Quiet days, and some Ultreyas. I hope there will be more crossover events eventually. “Being a “Crossover event is never the main reason for its existence. The aim of Quiet days for example is to build up our spiritual life, but it can also bless others and so can easily become a crossover event.

I wish to also thank the diocesan clergy who have supported Cursillo by allowing us the use of their churches and those members of the diocesan leadership team who have been willing to preside and preach at our final weekend services. A big thank you to Rev Dianne Cox and Rev Bruce Harrison for their helpful role as spiritual advisors in the two weekends held last year.

It is good to remind ourselves that in Cursillo we are involved in something of great importance. Behind the scenes we are blessing countless churches and adding to the spiritual life in the diocese. Each one of us have played a part in this and will continue to do so. I heard this year someone making the observation “where would the church be without Cursillo?” and as I thought about it, my answer would be “impoverished”. There are riches in Cursillo which touches hearts and lives to the extent that we are able to bless others in ways we would not have done without the encouragement of Cursillo. I am thankful to be part of Cursillo in the York diocese.

Jonathan

A great big “THANK YOU” to all who have encouraged us by their love and attendance at Ultreyas and other Cursillo events. Thank you also to those who, have supported Cursillo financially in this diocese



Our Prayers are with the family of Pat Snowden from Redcar who died on March 14th. She has been part of Cursillo and always helped with refreshments when we went to Coatham in Redcar, and we are saddened at her passing, but rejoicing she is now in heaven with the Lord Jesus whom she loved and sought to follow during her life.

Jesus said “In my Fathers house are many rooms. I will take you to myself that where I am there you may be also” (John 14:1)

Meet Wanda



BIOGRAPHY

My Christian journey started in a refugee camp in Leicestershire where my parents had settled after the war. They had experienced a traumatic time once war had broken out. They were taken to Siberia and lost their eldest son aged 10 on the way. They spent the rest of the war in the Middle East.

The Catholic church and Polish culture was entwined and I was brought up a catholic taking my first Communion in our little community church, having been baptised in a Polish church in Market Harborough. I never questioned the rituals or beliefs of the Catholic Church until I went to the Vatican when I was 19. The wealth and riches of the objects displayed astounded me. I went through a period of doubt. I have never doubted God but the workings of the church.

I remained a Catholic although not a frequent church goer. After my mother's death I went back to regular worship at the Catholic church. I found very little warmth and eventually I stopped going.

When I came to Scarborough in 2011 I started going to the Church of England. I converted in 2013.

I am now a regular worshipper at St Mary's in Scarborough. I have done a number of courses in the last few years which has deepened my understanding of the bible.

I have been very much overcome by grief and loss since 2013 and my re-affirmation of faith came on the beach in Scarborough after my husband received a diagnosis of terminal cancer. I handed my life to God at that moment and He has given me strength to cope since then.

I was a teacher of Special Needs children and young people in London and Nottinghamshire before my early retirement. I then worked with Care Leavers. I also worked as an Accommodation Officer in Nottingham working with vulnerable people including prisoners. In my retirement in Scarborough I have been a volunteer adviser at Citizens Advice. I also write short stories and have been trying to finish a novel. I love live music especially the blues and jazz.

A friend of mine, a retired vicar introduced me to Cursillo and in 2017 York 25 I made my weekend. Cursillo has been my spiritual rock and I have made such good friends. I have felt such love at each reunion and Ultreya. The National Ultreya in Chester was very special.

I was elected BACC rep at the AGM in 2019 and I have met many Cursillistas since then from all over the UK. I have been attending the York Diocese Secretariat since the last AGM.

I was astonished when approached by Jonathan for the post of Lay Director. After much discussion with Jan and Jonathan and many prayers I accepted.

Together with all of you, I will do my best to follow the excellent work done by Jan.

Ultreya

WANDA

**To all Cursillistas of the Church in Wales, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of England from the
National Spiritual Director Rev Stephen Bowring**

The current Coronavirus outbreak has led to stringent recommendations from the government that have an impact on every aspect of our daily life at present. The need to “self-isolate” and to curtail all but essential human contact runs contrary to the very heart of the Cursillo ethos: how can we be a “Christian community in action” if we can't gather together? What can we do to be Cursillistas if we cannot meet in Group Reunion? Beyond the very obvious practical questions lay deep theological issues. Are we placing human understanding above God's providence – should we just ignore the whole business and trust in God to protect us? We come back to the age-old problem that St Paul wrestles with, the need to be “in” the world but not “of” the world. How we strike a balance is a question we all struggle with from time to time, and has been brought into sharp focus again by the situation we now find ourselves in. There are no easy answers.

Given that Paul gives instruction (Romans 13.1) that as followers of Christ we should all pay due obedience to the civil authorities, the “ostrich head buried in the sand” approach is clearly un-biblical. On the other hand, we surely can't just switch off our faith in an all-powerful, all-merciful God for a few weeks until we all feel a bit better and are ready to go back to church. How do we put Christ on the throne of our hearts through this crisis? One thing to note is that when Jesus needed to be close to his Father he often withdrew from those around him for a time – he “self-isolated.” Fasting has long been seen as a useful tool in our spiritual journey, and fasting can be much more than just going without food. The Desert Fathers and many since have found a closeness to God in withdrawing from normal society. I know that for those with children at home or money worries made worse by job threats or a host of other life-changing problems thrown up by no fault of their own this may be a hopeless aspiration, but perhaps for some of us to some limited extent we can view the present situation as not so much a restriction from on high as an opportunity from even higher. At the very least we can try to lift ourselves out of everyday pressures by picking up that book that's been languishing unopened on the shelf ever since we bought it.

It's easy to see how it might be possible to turn our enforced internment into advantage for piety and study, but what about action? Well, one thing that Cursillo shows us is that Christian action can take a wide variety of forms. We are all familiar with the power of Palanca, and the current restrictions don't prevent us from sending messages of prayer and support to one another, or perhaps picking up the phone to ring that friend or relative that normally somehow we never quite get round to contacting despite our best intentions.

Thanks to modern technology we can still have *virtual* meetings through video calling and conferencing – that may sound frighteningly complicated if you've not done it before, but many people of all ages do now keep in touch with far-off family and friends this way. “Skype” Reunion Groups might even catch on and persist when we start to get back to normal! For those of us who (for the present at least) are considered to be in the low risk category there will be ample opportunities to look out for those who cannot or dare not step outside. In a way this situation opens a door for us to put our faith into practice in ways we might not have previously considered, or thought appropriate. We will all be surrounded by those who need us to be *the hands and feet of Christ* right now. Remember the promise? “Christ is counting on you...” It would be no use pretending that this whole Coronavirus business is anything but an awful tragedy, and for some a very unpleasant or even fatal situation. There is so much uncertainty around the immediate future and beyond, but one thing we can rely on is that God does not abandon us, and that he too understands pain and loss. He transformed the tragedy of the cross into the glory of resurrection and atonement; so then we can safely look to him to draw good things out of this mess. Back to Paul's letter to the Romans (8:18) again: “*I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.*” *Ultreya*

A letter from our SD, Jonathan Couper

Dear All,

Jesus said we could talk to our Father who is in heaven. So heaven is not far away.— because our Father in heaven hears us when we are on the earth. Earth is very different from heaven. There are no viruses in heaven for a start! Although God's will is not done on earth as it is in heaven, nevertheless, it is possible by walking with God to bring God's will on the earth. May we do what we can to further God's Kingdom in our generation in our world.

What can we do?

This is a time to seek the Lord- May the bible verse be true for us "I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears" Psalm 34:4.

It is also a sabbatical for our nation and the nations of the earth. A time for ordinary people to take stock. In this season our roots as individuals and as a nation are being tested. Roots are where we draw our life from, and are formed by what we love. During this exceptional time, we may need to develop new routines, and included in these will be a change to our normal spiritual disciplines whilst churches are closed.

I have some suggestions we could adopt to help us through this extended season

1. Thank God for Jesus every time you wash your hands. We enter God's presence not just with clean hands but a pure heart (Psalm 24:4).
2. Take time to read a spiritual book or aim to read a book of the bible perhaps with a commentary . Perhaps use a notebook or computer to write down thoughts or prayers.
3. Start a spiritual journal writing down your thoughts as you live each day.
4. Keep your normal hours of getting up in the morning and going to bed at night. Routine is important.
5. If you can, start a new project at home—this could be anything from doing a jigsaw to developing a garden feature. Whatever it is, do something which you enjoy.
6. Talk to one another. Use email and telephone .

Abide in Jesus!

Jonathan

Rev Jonathan Couper



BACC Pages

Information on what is happening nationally or internationally
An edition is available on the BACC website. <http://www.anglicancursillo.co.uk/bacc-pages.php>

Publicity leaflets & posters

Supplies of Cursillo publicity leaflets and posters for your church notice board will be available at Ultreyas or ring Jan.

Prayers

"We take refuge with you, O God, our redeemer and our rock. You who made us and understand us, know so well that we are weak-willed and a lot less clever than we think. Help us and protect us, we pray; strengthen us and hold on to our hands, that we may not lose our footing as we walk the straight and narrow way of eternal life. For we ask it in Jesus' holy name."

Amen

"Whatever happens to us in life, dear Lord, even when the road is rocky and leads us through wild or frightening passes, help us to hold on tight to you and to drink from the springs of grace along the way"

Amen

Bible Verses

God said "I am with you always to the close of the age"
Matthew 28:20

Hymn

"Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ"

Bible Verses

"From the ends of the earth I call to you, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I" Isaiah 62:1

"Seek the Lord whilst he may be found Call upon him whilst he is near" Isaiah 55:6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths" Proverbs 3:5,6

Some words of
Teresa Of Aquila

We are so far from esteeming highly enough our soul in which God so delights
Each of us possesses a soul, but we do not realise its value as made in the
image of God;

therefore we fail to understand the great secrets it contains.

If we reflect, we shall see that our soul is a paradise in which God takes
delight.

Let us think of our soul as resembling a castle,
formed of a single diamond containing many rooms .

In the centre, in the very midst of them all is the principal chamber
in which God and our soul hold their most secret conversation.

What do you imagine that dwelling to be
in which a king so mighty, so wise, so pure- containing all good- can come
to rest?

Nothing can be compared to the great beauty
and capabilities of our soul.

However keen our intellects be,
we are no more able to comprehend
the depths of our soul"



Please Fill in the membership form and return them to Lynn Stephenson. Because of the data act we need your permission to communicate with you (and we also need the right details).

PLEASE SEND THE FORM BACK

Tell us on the membership forms if you would like to join a Reunion group or serve on a weekend team etc.

Thank you to all those who have already sent us your membership donation for Cursillo this year. Thank you to those who have given extra to Cursillo over and above the membership donation. We are also encouraged by those who have decided to support us each month. We really appreciate the opportunity this gives to expand the numbers of people who are able to benefit from Cursillo. Thank you also to those who have given us permission to apply for gift aid on each donation which increases the gift by 25%

***Thank you so much
Janet Green (Treasurer) & Lynn Stephenson
(Membership Secretary)***



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