

## From our Lay Director, Wanda Maciuszko.

My dear Cursillistas

As I sat down to write a message to you I did not know where to begin as we are all facing Lockdown 3 and all the restrictions we have again. I came across this reading from a friend, a fellow Cursillista, who had sent it at a very sad time for me having lost my nephew in terrible circumstances. I had been very close to him and I felt I had not done enough to save him. This gave me great comfort.



But those who hope in the Lord  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint.

**Isaiah 40:31**



I looked it up in the Oxford Commentary and the message is we must remember the creative power of God and his concern for the faint and the powerless. The human race is powerless in the face of this awful virus. The community then did not know their future and how it was going to be for them after exile. We do not know what a post pandemic future will be for us personally, for the Church or for Cursillo.

I do know that Cursillo will rise again from its hibernation as Jonathan said right at the beginning of this pandemic. We will fly, run and walk again together in person. God will create the future and we have to be patient.

Prayer has been such a comfort to me and I feel so close to all of you through my prayers for you. Please continue your love for each other and communicate in whatever way works for you

I am always here to listen. Blessings to all of you. *Wanda*

## York Cursillo 'Zoom' Ultreya

**Saturday 27th February 2.30pm till 3.30pm**

Our Zoom Ultreyas are becoming more popular: we have 30 folk at our January one. So the next one will be on Saturday 27th February at 2.30pm. Rosemary Gillespie will be giving the Witness Talk. Just click on the link in the email that sent you this newsletter just before 2.30pm on the day (it'll be sent out again by email nearer the time). Click to join with audio and video when invited to on screen. You don't have to download Zoom or register, just join the meeting.

Hope to see you there.

## Our Lay Director, Revd Jonathan Couper, writes.

Dear All,

At the time of writing, as lockdown continues for us all, the old song "When the road is rough and steep fix your eyes upon Jesus" comes to mind.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) involves lifting our hearts up to the future. Our eyesight can easily drop away from Jesus when we focus on the present without the future. Without the future the present can easily become meaningless.

For the Christian the future is bigger than getting a vaccination or "returning back to normal" (whatever that is!). We have a special future when we shall meet Him face to face in a place prepared for us. Each mansion in heaven will be unique – just as you are unique. Each one is prepared for us by Jesus Himself (John 14:1). The home in heaven that He is getting ready for us will reflect our deep held hopes -some only God knows we have - and yet it will be marvellously much more than we could ever have imagined whilst on this earth. The transformation will be actual, the context breath taking, and our lives eternal.

But fixing our eyes on Jesus is not only about heaven when we die. The road to heaven starts on earth and involves a hope of Jesus with us and a determination to follow Him - something which the Queen demonstrates and made reference to in her Christmas broadcast a few weeks ago. Also, in other parts of the world, amidst the breakdown of society and civil war, or amidst famine, natural disaster or persecution, great resolve is being shown by millions of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world. We Christians in the UK have indeed at this time a path of dark days to tread and we too must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. He has a path ahead for each of us.

In the valley of the shadow of death where we walk, God's light can seem not too dissimilar to other lights and darkness can seem to be so strong. But we share with the rest of the global church the knowledge that there is no other real God than the Creator and our redeemer. He is the true light who has come into the world (John 1:9) and He continues with us (Psalm 23:4). As Job in his trials refused to back down from his walk with God, neither do we.

Paul also fixed his eyes on Jesus in difficulties. He pressed onto the end refusing to wallow in the past. He wrote, "Forgetting what lies behind. I press on towards the goal" (Philippians 3:13,14). We may remember times when we "wallowed" in our past sin or past hurts, and know this did us no good. We can also choose to wallow in the "good old days" or in our past achievements. This is not the way. Like Peter on the waves in the storm, let us just keep our eyes fixed on Him. Jesus is the beginning and the End. What he has started in your heart when faith came to you, He will finish. He will stay with you.

May God bless you in your roots of faith, in your homes and in your prayers, **Jonathan**



## VIRTUAL CURSILLO REUNIONS – DO THEY WORK?

2020 was a very difficult year for everyone. This time last year it was business as usual for us all. Then came lockdown, and it was as if the pause button had been pressed on our lives. Unable to meet in person, Ultreyas were stopped and our Reunion Group went into limbo. We hoped the halt would be temporary, so we were not too concerned – it gave each of us a chance to pause and reflect on our life, our priorities, and to reappraise how we would behave in the future when normality returned.

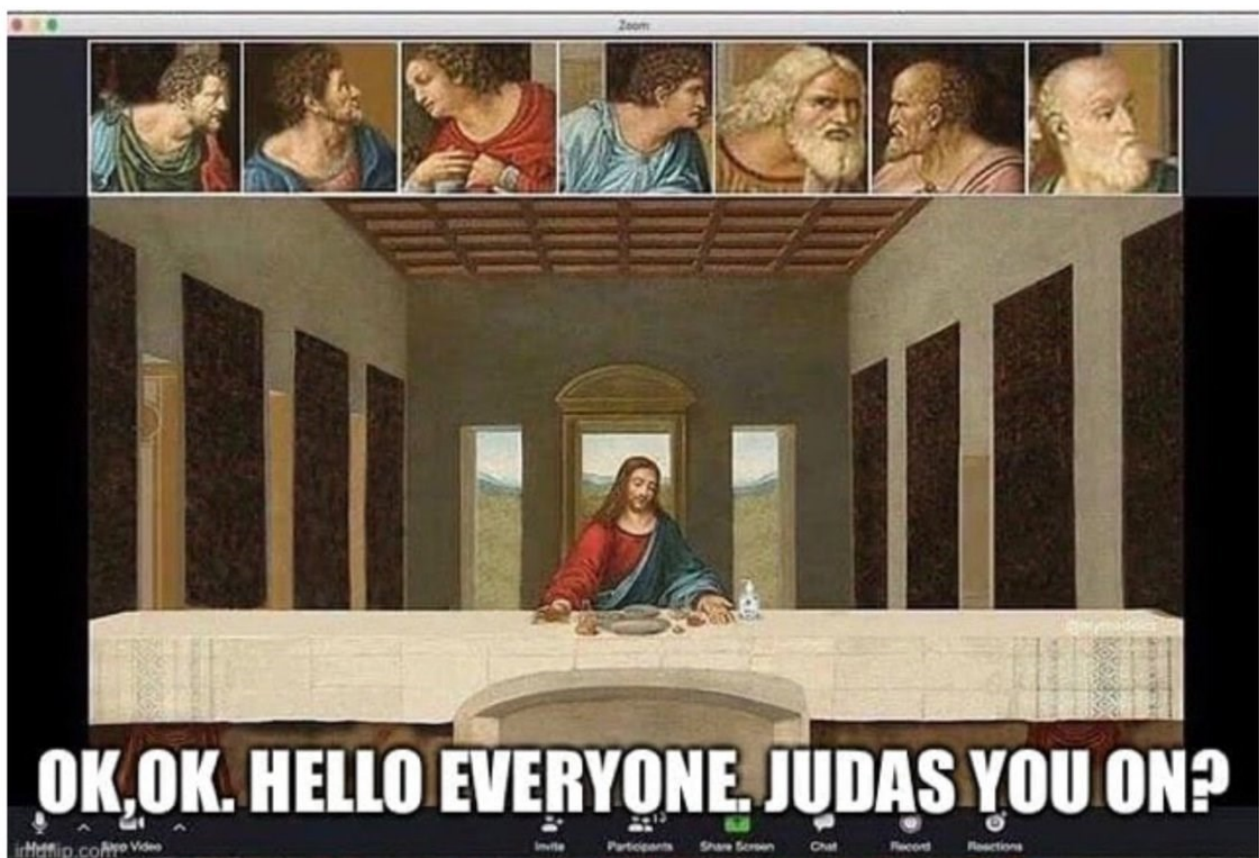
But as time went on we became restless and missed meeting up. Zoom was slowly entering our lives – although for those of us unfamiliar with the technology, it seemed frightening, and something to be avoided at all costs!

But we eventually decided to test the water. There are seven in our Group, and we live in different towns or villages in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Three members were either unable, or did not wish to meet by Zoom, but the rest of us gave it a try. We have now had four Zoom Reunions, and we will continue with them as long as lockdown prevents us from getting together in person. The nervousness about the technology is slowly disappearing, and the benefits are amazing – we feel part of Cursillo again! We are able to share the amazing things God has done in our lives, even in these dark times. We feel strengthened by the experience.

And as always, God steps in! We heard, via the Zoom Ultreya organised by Trevor, of one Cursillista who was unable to take part in Reunions because their Group were unable to meet together and did not want to Zoom. This Cursillista has now joined our Virtual Reunion Group.

Our closing message is that we can meet in our Groups virtually, and there is an opportunity to reach out to other Cursillistas who would be willing to meet virtually, but who are unable to do so at present. The Zoom Ultreya and Zoom Reunion are now with us – and who knows, in the future we may be able to combine physical and virtual meetings to enable those who are unable to travel to meetings to share our experiences live.

**Brian James, Pre-Cursillo Rep and future Lay Rector of York 30**





# Group Reunion Roundup

## **Revd Sue Nightingale, York.**

Our reunion group meets monthly, either at our house in York or, for the last few months, via Zoom. There is something so encouraging about hearing from Cursillistas the positive things that have been happening in our lives. In the first lockdown the novelty of Zoom meant it was a joy to see each other's faces. Not so exciting now, but great to see the smiles.

There about 10 of us in touch through the reunion group. Sadly Rosemary Macpherson and her partner Mark can't access this technology as yet, a reminder that we need to keep in touch with those without these resources. Many of our recent reflections have focused on the joys of nature around us, the autumn leaves and even the frosted cobweb.

## **Jan Watts, Scarborough**

At the beginning of the first lockdown I think we all rather thought things would be over in a week or two, so didn't worry too much about Group Reunion, knowing we'd soon be back together again. Later on, as it dawned on us that this was going to be a long haul, we tried to organise ourselves with Zoom meetings on the internet.

We were all (including me) absolute beginners and it took us a while to sort things out. We, like everyone else, kept saying "you're on mute" or "we can't see you we can hear you though". We also learnt how to run a Group Reunion this way and have a method now that seems to work. We had a lovely Christmas meeting with Santa hats, a glass in hand and party poppers!

When restrictions eased we made the most of the garden and had some great, distanced meetings – all the better because we could share the cake! When the rule of six came in we even met in the house, again well spaced out with windows open. However, in subsequent lockdowns we've resorted to Zoom again, having weekly meetings this time as this lockdown seems so much harder!

I can't speak for the others but the regular meetings have meant the world to me and we have been there for each other as various members have needed lifting up at different times. One of the great advantages of Zoom is that we have been able to draw in a couple from further away who had no Group Reunion before. The downside is that we have not been able to include those without the technology and have still tried to keep in touch by text etc. And we are all rather proud of our newly acquired technical skills!





## Acts chapter 4 verse 35:

**“They laid it at the apostles feet and it was distributed to each as any had need.”**

**Verse 34 puts it in context:**

**“There was not a needy person among them for as many owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.”**

**‘...giving to anyone who has need.’**

Acts 435 is an online giving charity, directly connecting those who want to give with those who are in genuine need of their help, through a network of local churches and charities. It provides specific practical help, in small but significant ways, to people known to local churches and other local organisations who are in need. 100% of what is donated to Acts 435 goes directly to those in need. Nothing is removed to cover administration – if you give £80 for a cooker, that full £80 will go to purchase the item.

It is a brilliant tool in the toolbox for helping people in need in our local community. Hope is being restored to people through a simple act and at times a life changing situation.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Stories from people helped by Acts 435.**

#### Help within hours.

A new advocate met a young woman who really wanted to cook healthy food for her two children. She was struggling with her gas bill and really needed a slow cooker. Within hours of putting the request on the Acts 435 website, the £35 was given. The young mother just cried when she found out. She couldn't believe that someone who didn't know her or her children could be so generous.

#### Support that makes an impact.

Kate suffered serious burns following an accident in her home and had been in hospital for some time. It was difficult for Derek to afford the daily bus fare to visit his wife but £60 was raised to fund a weeks bus pass. This lifted such a burden. The couple witnessed the practical love of the church in action which has impacted them both deeply.

#### Smiles all round.

A Sudanese family with several young children were living in a high rise flat with no bedding at all. They were delighted to have the church apply for funding and when the advocates arrived with bedding for the entire family their beautiful smiles lit up the flat.

\*\*\*\*\*

Cursillista David Thompson from Hull is an advocate for Acts 435 in his parish. “I love being able to help those in need through Acts 435. I believe this is what the church should be doing, showing love to the world through helping in this way.”

Anyone can be an advocate. The money has to go through an audited bank account like a PCC or other charity. If you would like to get involved as an advocate or donor please email [admin@acts435.org.uk](mailto:admin@acts435.org.uk) or call 07703 453862 to find out more. You can find them on [acts435.org.uk](http://acts435.org.uk)

If you would like to talk to David his contact details are [david\\_allan\\_thompson@hotmail.com](mailto:david_allan_thompson@hotmail.com) or call him on 01482 377427.



# Overwhelmed by darkness — Jackie Moore

I'm overwhelmed by darkness,  
Tears flow and I can't see.  
I hear the voice of Jesus say,  
"Let's have a cup of tea."

"A cup of tea Lord! Really?  
Is that all that you've got?"  
"Of course not child," He replied,  
"There's coffee in a pot."

It's Cafe Church this week you see,  
And I went ahead of you  
To prepare to meet with you today  
And I've made us both a brew.

Now, take this cup and sit with me  
And tell me of your pain.  
Cast all your burdens upon me  
And let me take the strain."

"Oh Lord! There is so much to tell,  
I don't know where to start."  
"I'm here to stay child, so just speak  
Of what is in your heart."

"My heart? My heart is broken Lord,  
I'm grieving and in fear.  
The future is uncertain,  
The way ahead unclear.

The whole world is in chaos,  
It's been brought to its knees.  
There's death and poverty and hate  
and famine and disease.

There's so much contradicting news  
And information too.  
Heated rows, conflicting views,  
We don't know what to do!"

"Peace, child, take a breath,  
Don't worry about the noise.  
Just seek my face and mine alone  
And listen to my voice."

"This world is full of troubles,"  
Jesus said, "but never fear.  
I have overcome the world  
And I am always near.

When things look dark as they often do  
Just take my yolk and I'll show you  
That I will light the way ahead  
Just trust in me," Jesus said.

Let us take a silent moment  
As we look at Jesus' face  
And see His Love and Mercy,  
His Compassion and His Grace.

To Tell Him of our worries  
For the church worldwide and near.  
For persecuted Christians  
In peril and in fear.

And what about our own church Lord?  
It just is not the same.  
We cannot hug or chat or sing  
Our praises to your Name.

We thank you though that through your gift  
Of our technology,  
We all can stay in touch and  
Even meet new family.

Let's ask him to protect our Queen  
and government; and give  
Them wisdom as they navigate  
The way that we should live.

And as for our community,  
We pray that we should be  
Your instruments of Love and Grace  
And Light for all to see.

We pray for all who suffer  
In spirit, body, mind  
And we thank you that you came to be  
The Light for all mankind.

We bring these people to you Lord  
With all their different needs.  
We name them individually  
And for them we intercede.

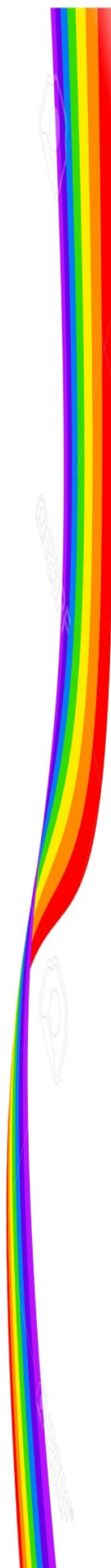
We lift up to you Lord, all those  
Who mourn in grief and woe  
The loss of loved ones; and we bring  
The names of those we know.

We ask you Lord that we may join  
The song of Heaven; and gain  
Comfort and Peace that by your Grace  
We all will meet again.

We fix our gaze upon the Lord  
His face with beauty true  
And as He looks into your eyes  
What does He say to you?

"I walked on water, calmed the storm  
and healed the blind and lame.  
Nothing is impossible when you  
call upon my Name.

I do not always calm the storm  
around you, that is true;  
But if you remain close to me,  
I'll calm the storm in you.



# Overwhelmed by darkness *(continued.)*

So do not worry child, I know  
that problems seem so large  
But I the Lord am faithful, powerful  
and I'm in charge!

Accept these prayers Lord, in the Name  
of Jesus Christ our Light  
For all mankind; and thankyou Lord  
that Simeon was right.

## Sea Speak

If the sea could talk,  
I wonder what would be said?

Would she be full of herself?  
Bragging about her hidden depths,  
or boastful of her rainbow corals.  
Would she harp on about  
tides that ebb and flow,  
of mighty waves and galloping white horses?

Yes, if the sea spoke  
I wonder what would she say?

Maybe she would look beyond herself,  
and give praise to the Creator  
who first spoke her into being.  
The One who set her limits,  
with towering cliff and sandy shore;  
who made the great sea creatures,  
and set her water a teem with life?

Perhaps she'd say how  
her voice lifts  
in great waves of pounding praise,  
and then bows to the God mightier  
than the thunder of her breakers.  
How she worships the One  
who has walked  
in the very valleys of her depths,  
and measured the vast waters  
in the palm of His hand.



Yes, if the sea spoke,  
I wonder what stories she would share?

Might she recall the day,  
two men walked on her waters?  
Or when her violent swell was stilled  
by the sea Lord's firm command?

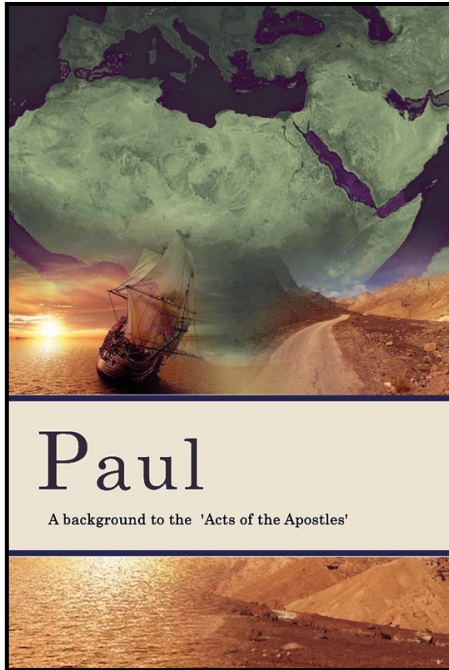
Maybe she would tell of  
empty fish nets, suddenly  
full of heaven's catch.  
Or how her gentle laps  
punctuated parables.

Yes, but if the sea spoke,  
I am sure she would not forget,  
how upon her sandy strand  
a breakfast was once cooked  
by the Son of God's own hand.

c Rosemary Wordsmith 2016



## Jonathan Couper has written another book!



This book tells the story of St Paul. You are guaranteed an easy read which will stimulate thought as you step back in history to walk with Paul through his travels around the Mediterranean world.

This book brings together seamlessly a narrative based on the book of Acts and Paul's writings. With recent insights from archaeology and ancient sources, this book provides a solid background to the New Testament, encouraging you to read the bible text itself with fresh eyes. It brings the world of St. Paul to life and is a "must read" for scholars and non-scholars alike, who are interested in bible history.

The book is now available on Amazon priced £14.99. To find it the full title is 'Paul A Background to the Acts of the Apostles.' . A Kindle version will follow next month.

***C**hrist within me*

***U**nder me*

***R**ound me*

***S**ilently waiting*

***I**ntensely*

***L**istening*

***L**onging to be*

***O**ne with me*

### **YORK CURSILLO ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL IMPORTANT !!**

You will soon be receiving, in the post, the Annual Membership renewal documents. We would ask you to return these as soon as possible in order that we can continue to keep in touch with you and keep you informed about local and national Cursillo news and events. Please sign and return these forms to the new Membership Secretary (Margaret James) as soon as possible. To comply with the current Data Protection Act, we are unable to keep your data on file unless we receive your approval for us to do so.

**We must emphasise, therefore, that if forms are not returned we are legally bound to remove your details from our membership list.**





## **York Cursillo Prayer Diary**

<b>Mondays</b>	- Hull and surrounding villages.
<b>Tuesdays</b>	- Bridlington, Driffeld, Beverley, Pocklington, Rudston, and Huggate.
<b>Wednesdays</b>	- Scarborough, Hunmanby, and Filey.
<b>Thursdays</b>	- Whitby.
<b>Fridays</b>	- Redcar, Brotton, Saltburn by the Sea, and Marske by the Sea.
<b>Saturdays</b>	- York and surrounding villages.
<b>Sundays</b>	- Other places such as Northallerton, Tadcaster and any I have missed out!



### **Contact details.**

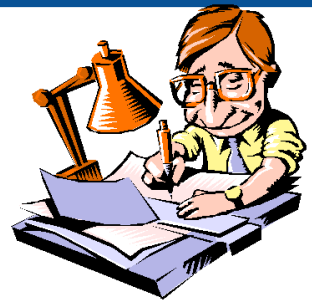
**Wanda Maciusko** : 01723 372643 / 07939 637257 [laydirector@yorkcursillo.org](mailto:laydirector@yorkcursillo.org)

**Rev. Jonathan Couper**: 07710 257550 [spiritualdirector@yorkcursillo.org](mailto:spiritualdirector@yorkcursillo.org)

**Margaret James (Membership Sec)**: [margaretjames1955@gmail.com](mailto:margaretjames1955@gmail.com)

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue of York Diocese Anglican Cursillo Newsletter.

The next issue is planned for the spring and items for inclusion should be sent to: [trevorking3355@gmail.com](mailto:trevorking3355@gmail.com) . Please contact me with ideas for articles well before this date. Trevor King, 4th Day Officer: 07941 338466



**York Anglican Cursillo is faith funded, so thank you to the increasing number of Cursillistas who support York Anglican Cursillo through Gift Aid donations, particularly by monthly standing order. Under Gift Aid, each £1 donated is worth £1.25 to York Anglican Cursillo, the extra 25p coming courtesy of HM Revenue and Customs. If you would like to start making monthly donations, please contact:**

**Janet Green our Treasurer.**

**01723 449940 [janetcffi@gmail.com](mailto:janetcffi@gmail.com)**

**This newsletter is published by York Anglican Cursillo. The views, opinions and statements expressed in it are those of the contributor and do not necessarily reflect opinions or policies of the Editor or York Anglican Cursillo.**

