



The British Anglican Cursillo[®] Council

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The Role of Clergy in Cursillo

Revised 2018

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Introduction

These booklets, which form the Resource Manual or Handbook for British Anglican Cursillo (BAC), are revised versions of the original documents gifted to BAC from the Episcopal Church of the USA in 1989. In the early to mid-2000s and again in 2013/4 They had been revised for basic differences between the Episcopal ways of doing things and for language alterations, but it became apparent that the booklets were not being read or used effectively by.

This major revision and rewording of the booklets was made by a group of experienced Cursillistas in 2017/8 and is intended for use by Diocesan Cursillo in order to explain and guide such groups in the practicalities and use of the Cursillo method. We believe that this reflects best practice.

In line with recent legal requirements there are also attached Guidelines and Policy Documents, particularly in regard to safeguarding, insurance and financial matters.

It is recommended that any future reviews of these booklets refer back to the original documents received from the Episcopal Church of the USA, copies of which should be held by the BAC President. *February 2018*

The Role of Clergy in Cursillo

Introduction

For years, Cursillo was often described as a 'lay movement'. But, from the beginning, Cursillo was understood as a 'movement of the Church' involving all the orders of ministry and equipping ministers, lay and ordained, to be apostles of Jesus Christ. Despite this fact, however, very little in the official literature of the Movement described the role of the clergy.

This booklet discusses the principles and practicalities of the clergy role in Cursillo.

Principles

Neither Clericalism nor Laicism

The centre of authority in Cursillo is not solely in either the clergy or in the laity but is in the community as a whole. Cursillo fits the understanding that ministry is of the laity, bishops, priests and deacons. In Cursillo, as in the Church generally, all must carry out their proper function within the Body of Christ. Only in this way can all grow in their understanding and commitment to the ministry which our Lord gives to the whole.

Not a 'lay movement' but 'a movement of the Church'

Cursillo often awakens and empowers the laity to their ministry of representing Christ and His Church to the world. But this does not mean that Cursillo is a 'lay movement'. Cursillo's aim is to help the whole Church, and each of its orders, to be itself. Of course, awakened laity enables the clergy to assume their proper roles in the Body more naturally and effectively.

In Cursillo, we do what is ‘normal’ for the Church.

If Cursillo is to help the Church be itself, it must conform clearly and authentically to the ideal norm of the Church. Thus, whatever obscures the true nature of the Church must not be permitted in Cursillo. On the other hand, whatever defines and describes clearly the nature and work of the Church belongs to Cursillo. Thus, for example, Cursillo involves the ministry of all the orders, is sacramentally based and proclaims the message of God’s grace.

Leadership in Cursillo is understood as ‘influence’

Cursillo seeks to identify people who are leaders – who influence or have the potential to influence the environments in which they live for Christ. This understanding of leadership is dynamic and functional, as opposed to structural or organisational. The emphasis is on DOING. Clergy who have identified Cursillo as a part of their apostolic work should not wait to be chosen to offer their gifts. They should begin to offer their gifts now. Of course, some clergy want to be the centre of the action. But the role of clergy in Cursillo is that of a servant. There is no place for the dictatorial, the over-bearing, or the unilateral.

Practicalities

The Three-day Weekend

The Three-day Weekend is a microcosm of Cursillo – a Cursillo-in-miniature. It focuses all the elements which span the Cursillo strategy from the Pre-Cursillo to the Post-Cursillo Fourth Day. The Three-day Weekend is built on the Cursillo ‘tripod’ of Piety, Study and Action.

All the elements are combined in a natural context and flow:

the sacraments, meditations and prayers constitute the religious centre of Cursillo – PIETY

the talks and discussions open a way for meaningful dialogue and reflection – STUDY

and the relationships that grow around the table groups and the whole community, help to develop the concepts of Group Reunion and Ultreya and lead to ACTION

But, although the Three-day Weekend is Cursillo-in-miniature, it is useful for considering the practical development of the clergy role as a Spiritual Advisor.

Establishing the Three-day Team

It is important that a good pastoral leader is identified before putting together a team for the Three-day Weekend. A firm foundation here promotes an authentic experience later.

Living the Spirit of the Group Reunion. When the Lay Rector and Spiritual Advisor for the team have been chosen they should begin to group. They should do this BEFORE any team members are invited. Time is needed for this 'team in miniature' to form and develop mutual confidence.

The relationship between Lay Rector and Spiritual Advisor is of central importance. No specific rules govern their relationship. Yet, generally speaking,

the Lay Rector is responsible for the team formation and the Weekend – arrangements, meetings, schedule, process.

The Spiritual Advisor is responsible for the message formation and spiritual progress.

The two have a relationship comparable to the producer

and director of a play or film. Their concerns overlap considerably. Trust is essential.

As members of the team are chosen, they, too, should begin to group. Eventually, as the team is formed, Group Reunion will mark the distinctive spirituality of the team AND the Weekend.

Grasping the 'Flow of the Message'

The climax of the Weekend comes with the revealing of the Fourth Day – Group Reunion and Ultreya. Getting to the climax, however, depends on understanding the flow of the talks – what each intends and where the crucial turning points are. The clergy for the Weekend need to take seriously their role and should meet to review the talks which are to be delivered. (See the 'flow chart' at the end of this booklet)

In general terms, the flow is from the wider ideas of grace, faith, etc to the specific issues of Group Reunion, Ultreya and Spiritual Direction. The Meditations move from diffuse anxieties and a general awareness of God's love down to a specific address in 'Christ's Message'. The talks do the same: from general consideration of what it means to be a real human being, to finding very personal ways to be a Christian man or woman in a specific environment. Each day finishes with a talk that sums up the talks and activities of the day and prepares the way for the next. Within each clergy talk and meditation an attempt has been made in the commentary to show the central turning points – the focal issues presented. Careful attention should be paid to these.

The clergy for a Weekend team should have a deep understanding of the overall message, and each of its parts – only in this way can they give sound guidance to the Weekend as a whole.

NOTE: The Third and Fifth meditations need special attention. The third meditation is an attempt to present the human and divine Christ vividly as a person for the Cursillistas. It needs to impress on the Cursillistas a deep appreciation of the Lord whose word is both real and human, and is at the same time God's own. The fifth, 'Christ's Message', is the least structured of all and therefore requires meditation, the most preparation. This preparation should be completed in the course of the Weekend because it concerns the specific participants who are involved. The person who gives this meditation should be spiritually mature and very attentive to the Weekend as it unfolds.

The Third and Fifth clergy talks also deserve special attention. The 'Sacraments' talk can be very diffuse and extensive. It should not be. It is not a repeat of confirmation instruction.

The last clergy talk, 'Christian Life', CAN come after the 'Environments talk (and did so in the older format). But provision is made in the Workbook for this talk to come, more logically, after the 'Community in Action' talk. It is the last clergy talk and so presents the opportunity to tie the 'loose ends' together – catching up the missing elements or emphasising those which needed clarification. Furthermore, it presents a key piece in the message of the Weekend and of Cursillo generally: namely, developing a Rule of Life and making use of Spiritual Direction.

Helping the team to grow

The Lay Rector and the Spiritual Advisor should give careful attention to the selection of the team.

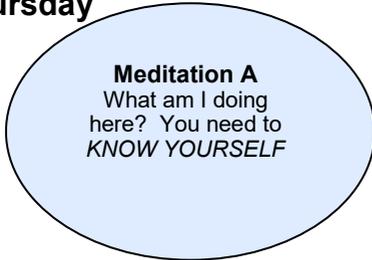
Insist that an essential part of each team meeting be Group Reunion.

Inspire the team to give themselves freely as an offering to

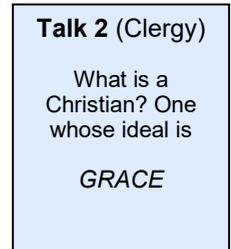
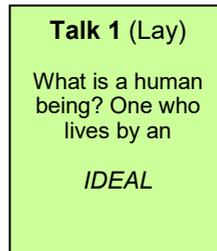
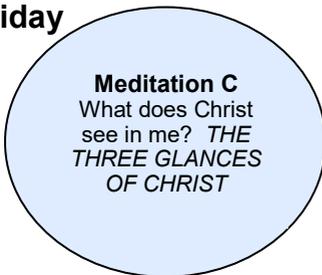
THE FLOW OF THE THREE-DAY MESSAGE

The Cursillo day is like the Hebrew day: the evening and the morning comprise the day

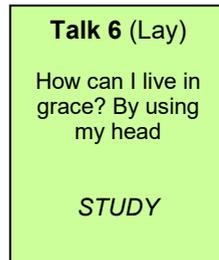
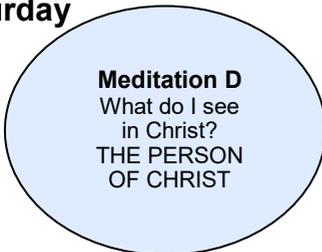
Thursday



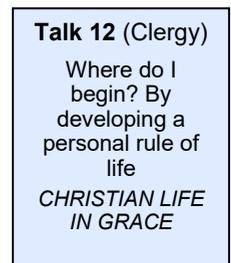
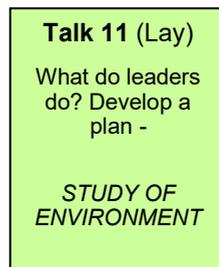
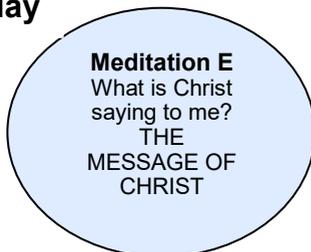
Friday



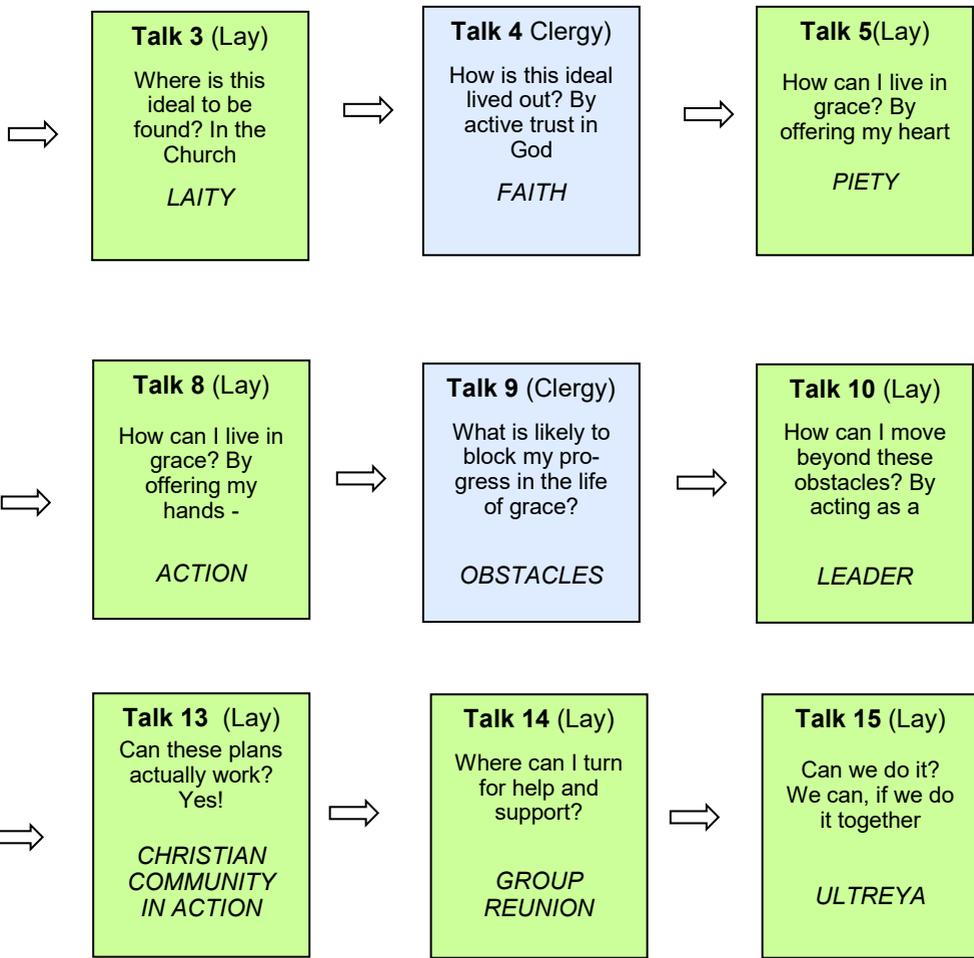
Saturday



Sunday



(Sunset to Sunset)



God. This sets the dominant servant theme of team formation.

The basic work of the team members is to form spiritual friendships with the participants. Cursillo is a 'fellowship of leaders,' not a classroom or an order of superiors and inferiors.

Challenge the team members to reflect on their faith. Make use of the time for preparing and presenting talks as an opportunity for exploring and deepening faith.

A large part of the Spiritual Advisor's work is helping the team come to see the overall integrity of the Weekend and how that really shapes vital Christian witness and living.

Spiritual Advisors should be sensitive to all forms of Christian spirituality and discipline. But at the same time, they should be firmly committed to the simple outline of spirituality which Cursillo presents.

Team formation and the Weekend are NOT the places to present distinctive forms of spirituality – such as speaking in tongues, or various forms of healing ministry. Cursillo is intended to awaken apostolic zeal. Other forms of Christian spirituality are best dealt with in other contexts.

Guiding the Three-day Weekend

Work closely with the Lay Rector – this is a team effort.

Invite the gifts and ideas of others in the team – and from participants – in the planning and carrying out of the liturgical services.

Be available – and announce this availability – for conferring and counselling with team members and participants.

Listen to the talks, as they are being given, during the Weekend – note where essential ideas are not covered or are not emphasised and fill in the gaps where possible and natural.

Time should be taken, in team meetings, to get the pulse of the Weekend. Be prepared to calm anxieties. Team members may need to be reminded that Cursillo is supported by prayer, and that the Spirit will after all guide the results – they do not need to be anxious.

Be open to participants, their fears, trials and joys; to team members and to the Holy Spirit.

Following the Three-day Weekend

Continue to meet with the Lay Rector for a short time in Group Reunion.

Evaluate together the Weekend – candidate selection, sponsor participation, team formation and Fourth Day Community support.

Report these evaluations in writing to the Secretariat, suggesting solutions to problems, things learned and ways to improve.

As Spiritual Advisor, prepare a series of letters to be sent to the participants at intervals following the Weekend. These might encourage them to begin Grouping, to attend Ultreyas, or offer Palanca. Such letters, coming at intervals, remind the Cursillistas that Cursillo is ongoing, and not a one-time experience.

Beyond the Three-day Weekend – Forwards and Backwards

Cursillo-in-miniature is not enough! Cursillo is about Christians being empowered and active as saints and apostles, bringing Christ to the world. Clergy responsibility in Cursillo does not end with the Three-days.

The principles that undergird the clergy role apply as well to the Pre-Cursillo and Post-Cursillo as to the Three days.

Clergy should begin to exercise their role:

In the pre-Cursillo

They should be involved in Group Reunion.

They should plan specific action – perhaps including (but not limited to) inviting key people to make Cursillo.

Attend Secretariat meetings. Make suggestions of areas that need to be evangelised. Volunteer to serve where needed.

Be a part of the Servant community – joining with others to study the Cursillo Method in depth, and finding ways to train leaders and apply the strategy. In some places it may be necessary to ‘agitate’ to get the Secretariat to form a ‘Servant community’. (See the booklet in this series on the subject).

In the post-Cursillo

Clergy have a responsibility to continue in Group Reunion.

Clergy should help and encourage participants into local communities, encouraging grouping and finding groups, starting one where necessary.

Suggest ways in which gifts of Cursillistas may be used.

Clergy have a key role to play in Ultreya. When called upon, to give a response to the Action Talk. To be sure that the Ultreya does not become merely an attempt to renew the feelings aroused by the Weekends. (Read carefully the booklet on Ultreya).

In Candidate Selection

Candidate selection is a part of the pre-Cursillo and essential to the Cursillo strategy.

Clergy are required to sign the form of application for a Weekend. Clergy are encouraged to speak to the diocesan Spiritual Director if they have any questions.

Prepare both the candidate and his or her sponsor to take their responsibilities seriously. The candidate should know, at the very least, what Cursillo is for and what will be expected of him or her when the Weekend is over.

In Sponsor development

Many Cursillistas may be helped to grow in apostolic outreach by sponsoring someone. This requires real discernment and wisdom, but can open doors for some who feel too timid to 'share their faith' in other ways. Please read the booklet on Sponsorship.

Sponsorship education should begin immediately. (see the booklet in the Resource Manual on Sponsorship). One image of the sponsor which is helpful is that of a 'godparent' or one about to be baptised. It implies ongoing concern and the willingness to make sacrifices for the one sponsored. Clergy can help by thinking through with sponsors the various ways in which they can carry out their responsibilities. Prayer is a very important part of the sponsor's work.

A Cursillista may be helped to grow in apostolic outreach by sponsoring someone in their turn. This requires real discernment and wisdom but can be helpful for someone who feels too timid to share their faith in other ways.

