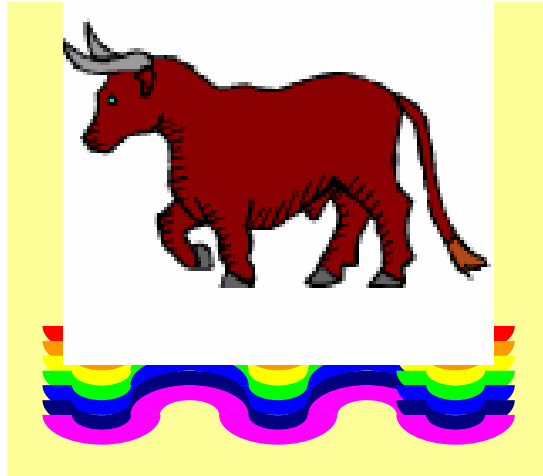


OxonFourth



The magazine of
OXFORD ANGLICAN
CURSILLO

No 1

December 2003

WELCOME TO EDITION ONE OF OXONFOURTH

A new magazine, a new badge and an unusual name. So let's explain in four easy steps...

*Firstly, **Oxonford** is one of the ancient names of **Oxford**.*

*Secondly, one of the ancient symbols of **Oxford** is the **Ox** crossing the **Ford***

*Thirdly, it is the **Fourth** day that **Cursillo** seeks to encourage*

*Fourthly, the **rainbow** is a biblical symbol of hope*

Put them all together and you get the Oxford Cursillo badge comprising the **Ox** crossing a **Rainbow**-coloured **Ford**. And put the words together and you get **OxonFourth**.

Whether or not you like the name or the badge, we hope you will enjoy reading this magazine, that you will wish to contribute to future editions, and that you will find it a helpful way to keep in touch with the launch of Cursillo in the Diocese of Oxford.

STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...

Please remember in your prayers

Shane Griffiths

*who is to be ordained Deacon at Dorchester Abbey
on 11th January 2004*

A message from the Diocesan Spiritual Director Revd Canon Dr Marilyn Parry

Christmas is coming (but we aren't there yet)

I've spent a fair bit of today signing Christmas cards, lots of them. Signing my name many times over left me wondering by the end if I was still spelling my own name right! However, the cards aren't for family and friends, but for people who are on a journey of discovery; they are all trying to understand what God wants of them as adult Christians. So the cards are going to folk who are on an adventure; we hope to encourage them as they travel.

In a sense, this message has the same purpose as the many cards. We are on a little pilgrimage in Oxford as we seek to be prepared for the gifting of Cursillo in this diocese. It is exciting, daunting and sheer hard work. It is a small example of the kind of thing God does with us as we try to live out our Christian discipleship: the Lord asks us to make ready and set off on a journey without being 100% certain of the route or destination. This is a very good time of year to notice this pattern.

Advent it is, and advent is about preparing for an arrival rather than about arriving. So individual Christians and the wider church keep this season as a way of getting ready for our divine guest: the remembrance of the child born at Bethlehem gives us a chance to make the way ready for our Lord. We travel in faith and prepare in faith, sometimes journeying ourselves and sometimes waiting for the One who makes the journey to us.

It isn't Christmas yet, though it soon will be. And Oxford 1 is fast approaching. I pray that both may be a time when you know Christ nearby.

Amen. Come Lord Jesus!

Marilyn



A message from the Steering Group Leader Matthew Caminer

“I am the Lord’s servant... may it be to me as you have said”

These words, much repeated in carol services up and down the country, reminded me of the recent Ultreya in Goring. At the heart of Cliff Scott’s Action Talk was the importance of the word ‘Yes’, the encouragement it gives, the empowerment it creates, and the doors it unlocks.

Thinking back through the last year, it seems to me that it is the word ‘Yes’ which has been the key to the huge progress that Oxford Cursillo has made. This time twelve months ago, there was a groundswell of enthusiasm, plenty of hopes, much promise, but not yet a great deal to show for it. Since then, we have had the blessing of the Bishops of Oxford and Coventry to proceed with the gifting. We have had two Ultreyas and a Day of Deeper Understanding (thanks London!). We have established a Steering Group, and by the time you receive this we will have held our first full Planning Day with our friends from Coventry.

Above all, three people have experienced a Cursillo weekend in neighbouring dioceses, three others have gained experience of serving on a team for a Cursillo weekend, and the dates for our first two Cursillo weekends have been confirmed.

It would be so easy to sit back and enjoy this progress, but, to quote an inscription that Miriam and I saw in a country church while on holiday: “*The past should be a springboard, not a hammock.*” Oxford 1 is barely sixteen months away and the intervening time will seem to fly by. This may suggest a heavy burden of having to say “Yes” to every request and to every prompting.

So let me close by drawing attention to the new Cursillo Rule of Life card, and specifically to the new section on taking care of yourself. My hope and prayer for us all is that over the holiday period we will have the time and space to relax, to take a few deep breaths and to recharge our batteries, and then face the new year with a spring in our step. Starting with me!

Ultreya!

Matthew



A message from the Lay Director of Coventry Cursillo Keith Hayward

Coventry Cursillo has been given the joy and privilege of gifting Cursillo to the Oxford Diocese. Gifting is a process of encouragement and support that ensures a new Diocese correctly adopts the Cursillo method. Coventry Cursillo held its first weekend in 1991 and now 300 people who have been through a Cursillo weekend are using the Cursillo method in each day of their Christian lives to grow in Christ and serve Him everywhere. The experience within the servant community of Coventry Cursillo is here to support and encourage, both in prayer and practical ways, Oxford Diocese in establishing their own Cursillo.

Cursillo has a structure and method to help confirmed Christians in their journey with Christ and in their service for Him. It is not a separate entity to the church, quite the opposite: it is a resource that has to be supported by your Bishops and your clergy.

Your weekend away is an opportunity to strengthen and develop your faith through Study, Prayer, Witness and Action. I personally want to encourage you to consider attending a Cursillo weekend. My own weekend helped to deepen my relationship with Jesus and by using the Cursillo method in my continuing journey has enabled me to lead a more focused life in my activities for Him.

Everybody needs encouragement in their Christian journey and our prayer for you from Coventry Cursillo is that you will seize the opportunity you have to grow and serve our Lord by being involved in the Cursillo movement and attend a Cursillo weekend.

Coventry Cursillistas pray for the Lord's blessing and guidance in the work that needs to be done to establish Oxford Cursillo.

Ultreya!

Keith

By agreement with the British Anglican Cursillo Council and the Bishops of Oxford and Coventry, Coventry Anglican Cursillo are gifting Cursillo to Oxford Diocese. This means that they will work closely with us, will advise and encourage us, and will ensure that the transition to running our own weekends goes smoothly. The Oxford Steering Group extends grateful thanks and Christmas greetings to our friends in Coventry Anglican Cursillo

Who's who on the Steering Group

The Steering Group is the body which draws together all the strands of Pre-Cursillo, Fourth Day and Weekend planning until we get to Oxford #1, when a Secretariat will be formed and a Diocesan Lay Director will be appointed

I am **Matthew Caminer**, and I am the **Steering Group Leader**. Miriam and I live in Old Windsor, where we moved from **Scotland** nearly two years ago, and where we participated in our Cursillo weekend. Before leaving Scotland, I was the Provincial Lay Director for Scottish Episcopal Cursillo, and it's a privilege to be serving Oxford Anglican Cursillo now.

My name is **Jacque Griffiths** and I am **Palanca Organiser** for Oxford Diocese. My role involves ensuring that Oxford Cursillistas are supported by palanca on their weekends. I made my Cursillo weekend with **Canterbury** diocese whilst living in Chichester but now live in Watlington where my husband will be curate from January.

I am **Jill Iredale** and I worship in the Risborough Team Ministry, and am married to Frank with one son, Tim. I made my Cursillo at **Coventry** 17. It was part of a momentous year for me, having travelled through the Biblelands and visited Rome earlier in the year. I currently hold the position of **Treasurer** on the Oxford Steering Group.

My name is **Cliff Scott** and I'm from **Coventry** Cursillo, I am married to Lourraine, and we have a son and daughter. My role is that of **Coventry Gifting Officer**, helping Oxford Cursillo in any way I can as it works its way towards the first weekend in 2005, I am overjoyed to be called to work with you during the next two years.

I am **Andrew Garrett**, and my Cursillo "baptism of fire" happened in **Lichfield**. At the time I was living in Goring-on-Thames, but four years ago I moved to Kennington, near Oxford, where we are just starting up an Oxford reunion group. I have taken on the role of **Registrar**, the contact and administration point for those wishing to go on a Cursillo weekend.

I am **Marilyn Parry** and I came to adult faith in the Episcopal Church (USA). I'm married to David, a (very English) priest who is serving in Blackbird Leys, I made my Cursillo on **Wakefield** 13 and am the **Diocesan Spiritual Director**. I am a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral and also work as Diocesan Director of Ordinands.

My name is **John Christophers**, and I live in Nottingham. I made my Cursillo at **Southwell** and I have held various positions on BACC. My role on the Steering Group is to represent BACC as **Gifting Liaison Officer**, working with the whole team to give guidance and help ensure that the essential message of Cursillo is maintained.

Cursillo and Money

Here we go again! The church is always asking for money! Actually Cursillo is different. Really! Overheads are kept to a minimum, there is no subscription, and most dioceses either offer their weekends on a faith-funded basis or at least subsidise the costs so that participants may sign up regardless of financial means. Cursillo is continually blessed in the way that faithful planning is rewarded.



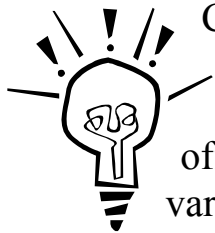
None of this means that the weekends and all the background preparations just happen. Regardless of our prudence they are expensive, and we have to make provision for them.

Jill Iredale, Steering Group Treasurer, writes...

“Cursillo in the Diocese of Oxford is now going from strength to strength, and finance needs to keep pace with the progress that is being made. May I encourage you to consider setting up a monthly Standing Order to help with this? If you feel you would like to Gift Aid your donation, then all the better. Although we do not currently have charity status, we hope to put this in place in the near future and then both you - and Cursillo - will gain from the tax benefits. You should have received a double form with your Easter mailing, but I know how easy it is to mislay papers, so please do contact me and I'll send you another.”

Cursillo Leaders' Workshops

Cast your mind back to your Cursillo weekend, and you will remember being reminded that in one way or another we are all leaders, leaders in the sense that we all have a role to bring others to Christ, to leaven our environments. In



Cursillo *everyone* has a role to play, whether on weekends or in the background organisations that make Cursillo work. To build on the knowledge that we have, the British Anglican Cursillo Council offers residential Cursillo Leaders' Workshops several times a year at various locations around the country. On a CLW, we are reminded of the essentials and purposes that lie behind Cursillo: they are most definitely not courses on how to run a Cursillo weekend. CLWs are for anyone who has something to contribute, and especially at this time of preparation and building they will be of special value. Dates and venues for 2004 on the back cover.

So what is a Cursillo weekend really like?

You only have to look through the pen pictures of the Steering Group members to realise that we have participated in Cursillo weekends in many different dioceses. Of course they all have the basic programme in common, and there is no doubt that they are all touched by the Holy Spirit in a very special way. By the same token, however, each of them has its own special flavour. Maybe it's the building, or perhaps the personal dynamics. Whatever, it's almost impossible to sum up a Cursillo weekend in a way which will make you think: "Yes, that's exactly how it was."

During the last few months, three people from across the Diocese have been on Cursillo weekends, and it's clear that they all found it a worthwhile experience. For **Kevin Beer** from Old Windsor this is how it seemed...

"I set off on a Thursday evening to spend 72 hours in the company of total strangers, not really knowing what to expect, but going with an open mind. It took the first evening to unwind from the "busy-ness" of the world that I had brought with me. Throughout the weekend, we ate and drank together and I experienced the sort of Christian community that is described at the end of Acts 2. We worshipped, prayed, and learned about God and about ourselves and I now have nineteen new good friends. My first description of Cursillo was as a spiritual health farm, where you are pampered with God's love – a very pleasant, surprising and moving experience, but this describes the means and not the motive. The result is a much closer walk with Jesus and new faith, motivation, pleasure and honour to do things in his name. Cursillo certainly works for me!"

There's only one way to find out what a Cursillo weekend is really like, and that is to go on one. The leaflet describes the weekend in a little more detail, and any experienced Cursillista will be glad to fill in the details. Go for it!

Until Oxford Anglican Cursillo starts its own weekends in April 2005, we are working with other dioceses to make it possible for individuals to participate in Cursillo weekends elsewhere. We have built up special relationships with Coventry, London and Chichester, and also have offers of spaces from Salisbury and Canterbury, so there is almost certainly a date which will fit into your diary. For further details of these weekends, please contact Andrew Garrett, Telephone: 01865 739943 email: am_garrett_oxford@yahoo.co.uk

How can I help others to benefit from a Cursillo weekend?

*In Cursillo, many who have found the treasure of reawakened Love, Prayer and Service often wish others to have the same experience.
The answer is to sponsor someone*

These are the opening words of the sponsorship Guidelines. And it is true. Think how often you have had a good experience. You told someone about it and perhaps you said: “You should try it!” or “Give it a go and make up your own mind”. Cursillo stresses the importance of personal contact, and sponsoring someone to go on a weekend is no exception. It is not, though, something to be done without thought and prayer. A Cursillo weekend isn't everyone's cup of tea, and it isn't right for everyone. In any case now may not be the right time in their spiritual journey.



Sponsorship begins before the weekend...

If you are thinking about sponsoring someone to go on a Cursillo weekend, read the guidelines, which offer helpful advice about things to take into consideration before you approach the person. You will need to help them identify the right weekend to go on, and see to everything else that has to happen before they pack their case and set off.

... and continues after it has finished

It may be natural to think that once the weekend has happened, the work of the sponsor is over. In fact it is after the weekend that the responsibility of the sponsor becomes most acute, because it is at this stage that the new Cursillista needs to see in a practical way how they fit into the Fourth Day and how it may serve them in their journey. You will need to help them to get into a Reunion Group and to go to Ultreyas, if they wish to. In fact, as it says in the guidelines, “*No one should sponsor a candidate unless they are also prepared to welcome that person back into Group Reunion, Ultreyas, and all the activities of the Fourth Day.*”

The Sponsorship Guidelines are available at all Ultreyas, or a copy may be obtained direct from the Registrar (see previous page)

Fourth Day

We are told on our Cursillo weekends that the three days of the weekend are followed by the Fourth Day, the rest of our lives. Cursillo encourages us to build our lives around Prayer, Study and Action, and provides us with foundations upon which to build that life. These consist of Rule of Life, Group Reunions, Ultreyas and Spiritual Direction. In this issue of OxonFourth, we focus on how having a spiritual Director can help us in our Fourth Day.

Spiritual Direction – Why?

We all have a Spiritual Director, the Holy Spirit. He reminds us of all that Jesus said and taught, in the Father's Name. He is our Companion on the Way; and in fact another name for Spiritual Director is Faith Companion, or Soul Friend. That helps get near the heart of this special relationship under God.

Spiritual Direction is about having someone to help us go deeper, listen better, look harder, move further on; not only in new ways to pray or to meet God, suggestions for study and a place to review action, but also somewhere for the hard bits of the road. We sometimes get stuck or discouraged, so it's good to have a safe place for fears and doubts as well as joys. For example, what happens when the truth of ourselves and the truth of the Gospel collide in "real life"? How can we begin to see God working in us through difficult situations or people? How do we listen to the 'still, small voice', and discern God moving in the depths of our soul – this way, or that way? A spiritual director helps with the interpretation and "tuning in" work of the spiritual life.

Being in Spiritual Direction gives an opportunity to go beneath the surface of faith in a constructive and nurturing way. As someone said: "*It's like going down to the basement with a flashlight – not scary for we are accompanied in the Name of the Lord, and we find all the buried good stuff instead of just all the junk*"!

So ask your fellow Cursillistas about their experiences with this, use the resources of the Diocese*, and pray about finding the right someone for you. God is all about loving you into the best "you" you can be, and Spiritual Direction is a way to draw closer to His truth, grow in knowledge of self and of grace, and be better equipped to lead the life to which we are called – life in all its fullness. So: Spiritual Direction – why not?

A Cursillista

**** The Diocese of Oxford offers a network of Spiritual Directors for anyone, whether Clergy or Laity. For further information about this network, which is called **SpIDir**, please contact Diocesan Church House.***

When is Palanca?!

Yes that's right, *when* is palanca?

We all remember from our Cursillo weekends that the word *palanca* is Spanish for a lever. In Cursillo we use the term to mean that combination of prayer and a gesture which helps or supports someone else. We are perhaps most familiar with palanca in the form of notes or letters promising prayer and offering encouragement. Most of us can remember when and how the concept was introduced at our own Cursillo weekend.

But that's the whole point. Palanca is not just about Cursillo weekends. It isn't just about Cursillo come to that. It's about how we give expression to our support for each other, at any time and in any place.

One definition of palanca is that it is written prayer. Perhaps, but there's so much more to it than that.

Palanca is that quiet word of encouragement, affirmation or support...

Palanca is a phone call to say that you care...

Palanca is the time spent praying for someone else...

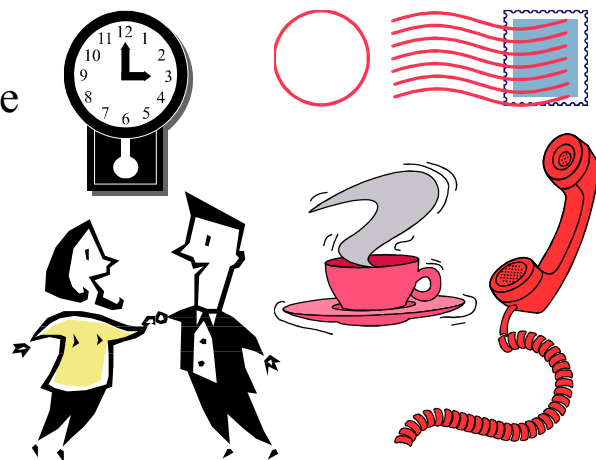
Palanca is the time that you give somebody, just listening...

Palanca is something you plan...

Palanca is something you do on the spur of the moment...

Palanca is...???

When is palanca?



Dates for the diary...

Saturday 13th March

Ultreya, St Luke's Church, Old Windsor, Berkshire

Friday 21st to 23rd May

Cursillo Leaders' Workshop, Wydale Hall, Nr Scarborough

Saturday 10th July

Ultreya and Family Picnic, Diocesan Church House, North Hinksey, Oxford

Saturday 4th September

Ultreya, St Mary's Church Hall, Princes Risborough, Bucks.

Friday 6th to 8th August

Cursillo Leaders' Workshop, Offa House, Nr Coventry

Saturday 13th November

Ultreya and AGM, Goring Community Centre, Goring

*All Ultreyas start at 11:00, with refreshments available from 10:30,
and are followed by a Bring-and-Share Luncheon*

Thursday to Sunday

21st-24th April 2005

Oxford Cursillo #1

Thursday to Sunday

27th-30th October 2005

Oxford Cursillo #2

