



Ottawa Anglican Cursillo
Re-imagining Cursillo
for the
21st Century

Re-Imagining Cursillo for the 21st Century

Table of Contents

Re-Imagining Cursillo for the 21st Century	2
May 6, 2023 Workshop	3
What is our Purpose?	5
Movement vs Ministry	5
Reports from Small Committees.....	6
Communications and Promotion Recommendations	6
Sponsorship	7
Cursillo Weekend	12
Group Reunions	16
Education.....	20
Inclusivity.....	25
Clericus Visits	26

May 6, 2023 Workshop

On May 6, 2023 26 people attended a 4 hour workshop, entitled Re-imagining Cursillo for the 21st Century. Rev Kerri Brennan, facilitated the session and Bishop Shane Parker joined us for part of the morning as we met in groups to discuss questions that Kerri posed to us. From our discussions, we discovered that Cursillo remains a vibrant, living community, called and equipped by God to continue the work that God has called us to do.

The first set of questions asked us to think about what inspired us about Cursillo, how has Cursillo influenced our faith, what keeps us involved in Cursillo. Answers to these questions included: being invited by a member of the community; being supported by community; the role of the community; connection with the community, education, and faith. Do you see the common word here, community! Cursillo is a worshipping community that wants to share with others the experience of being part of this vibrant community.

The second set of questions asked us to think about anything that might inhibit our experience with Cursillo or obstacles that we might face in participating or recruiting. We wanted to know what needed to be changed or let go. Answers to these questions included: perception/reputation of Cursillo, busy lives, lack of advertisement; difficulty in finding group reunions; sponsorship responsibilities too onerous or intimidating.

Out of the many notes taken on May 6th, some themes have been highlighted that call us to review current processes and look at reimagining them and improving upon them.

Promoting Cursillo

- how do we promote Cursillo across the Diocese, with laity, with clergy?
- we need to build relationships with Parishes – such as parish representatives
- what are the ways we can share information with everyone (look at CACS website on giving a talk in parishes about Cursillo)?

- we need a system in place to respond to the promoting of Cursillo – someone contacts secretariat about wanting to attend a weekend, what do we do?

Sponsorship

- what is the goal of sponsorship?
- does the current model work?
- Are there other models that can be explored?

Group Reunions

- many, many Cursillistas are not in a group reunion, yet it is an important aspect to Cursillo and continuing our faith journey
- we need to explore ideas for helping people find group reunions
- eg. For the first 6 months after a weekend, would it make sense for the table groups of the weekend to be a group reunion – could meet via zoom

Education

- we crave knowledge; there is a feeling of hunger to continue learning and growing our faith
- we could explore ideas at a Diocesan level for offering talks, say have sessions on piety, study, action
- fits in with Shape of Parish Ministry and Lifelong formation
- what does this look like for Cursillo – is it Day of Deeper Understanding or something different?

Weekend

- With the shortened weekend, would it make sense to combine talks?
- Look at evaluating the shortened weekend, does it still make sense?
- Look at how we can become more transparent about the weekend, while still keeping some of the surprises
- Look at how we can put more focus on the Fourth Day rather than the weekend
- Look at team make up and how to involve more people
- Look at the music for the weekend, especially the liturgical music, it has not changed in many years

What is our Purpose?

We need clarity around the purpose of Cursillo.

- Are we offering a weekend experience to do some training and leadership development for potential parish leaders?
- Or are we trying to provide a retreat setting that offers pastoral care and healing to people struggling with various aspects of life?
- Both are fine, but we would have to design very differently depending on the focus.

The purpose of Cursillo is to present a method of living as a Christian in the world. It also provides a method for continual, personal spiritual growth. A Cursillo is an encounter with Christ and an experience during which the participants live and learn that which is fundamental to being a Christian.

The Cursillo Weekend is a ministry of the diocese that offers the gift of a weekend away where people from diverse backgrounds and experiences can find refreshment, intentional community, study and worship while they explore their faith together, and discern what God might be calling them towards at this time.

Movement vs Ministry

The Ottawa Anglican Cursillo Movement is a ministry of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa.

Reports from Small Committees

Communications and Promotion Recommendations

Remove the Secrecy or Unknowing

- Invite clergy or interested folks to Ultreyas
- Offer opportunities of people to see what Cursillo is about
- Encourage Cursillistas to offer talks at their churches
- Develop a new PR Team to ensure that messaging about Cursillo is available at churches, on parish websites, as well as being willing to help build support for parish reps and having 1-2 presentations to the congregation each year

Communication

- Encourage churches to add Cursill's purpose to their website, bulletins and weekly emails
- Include Ultreya and weekend details in church bulletins
- Be available on church and diocesan website
- Have an active social media presence

Reconnect

- Connect with "flagship" churches and see what resources are available build upon
- Reconnect with Cursillistas and see what they'd need to reengage
- Bring back parish reps
- Get a list of folks willing to be a sponsor

Reach Out

- Create a PR team
- to contact and connect with Cursillistas and get feedback and info (Why are they not attending? What would they like to see? Let them know what we're doing.)
- Can we set up some intentional mentoring opportunities

4th Day

- Help new members find a small group to join
- Look for more ways and platforms for Cursillistas to share their journey
- Create a list of 4th Day groups that are open to new members
- Provide guidance on how to start a 4th Day group

Sponsorship

Documents Reviewed:

OACM Website – Sponsorship

OACM Handbook, Section 6 – Sponsorship

OACM Handbook Appendix J6 – Pre-Cursillo Coordinator

OACM Handbook Appendix L1 – Sponsorship Brochure

OACM Handbook Appendix L2 - Weekend Application Form

OACM Handbook Appendix M5 – Commissioning of Sponsors

OACM Brochure – 2022

Sponsors & Group Reunions

We started by a general conversation about the connectedness of Sponsors and Group Reunions. The challenges are finding a small group reunion for the new Cursillista after the weekend. There is a lack of clarity on the role of the Sponsor to link a Cursillista to a group reunion, compared to the role of the Parish Representative.

Recommendations:

Have the Sponsor work in cooperation with the Parish Representative (if there is one in the parish) to help the Cursillista with a small group.

Frequency of small group meetings should be the choice of the group.

Provide a Zoom (or other online) option.

Give suggestions for small group content in addition to the yellow card.

Payment for the Weekend

In the letter to Sponsors, it is suggested they make a financial donation to OACM.

Their time should be seen as a donation. Financial donations can be made at any time and an additional financial ask to a Sponsor may be seen as offensive in that their gift of time is not recognized.

Recommendations:

Make it clear that Sponsors do not pay for their Candidate.

Requesting Team members to make donations to cover the cost of a weekend should be kept in place.

Sponsor name

The name Sponsor could be misleading since it could imply that the Sponsor has to pay for the Candidate. Many sports and charitable events have sponsors which financially contribute to the event and/or specific participants. Updating the name of the role may reduce the expectation that the Sponsor pay for the Candidate's weekend.

Recommendations:

Consider changing the name to be Mentor as it has a more caring/guidance meaning. Or combine title to be Sponsor/Mentor.

How to Promote Sponsorship/Mentorship - Recommendations

Use the Parish Representatives. There can be a link between parishes for those parishes without a Representative, but with interested parishioners.

Invite a candidate to an Ultreya prior to a weekend to increase interest.

Prior to a weekend, have a focus during church services to highlight Cursillo; have Cursillistas briefly talk about their experiences.

Promote in bulletins, church web sites, Facebook and other social media pages related to the parish.

The current time commitment is undefined prior to a Weekend; a 1 year commitment is required after a Weekend. Re-define the commitment to 6 months before a weekend and 6 months after a weekend. This will ensure that the Sponsor/Mentor takes time to nurture the relationship before a Weekend and takes the new Cursillista to an Ultreya after a weekend. (Reference OACM Handbook Appendix L1)

Have a Sponsor Workshop on Zoom to outline expectations.

Have a Sponsor presentation at an Ultreya leading up to a Weekend.

Have a specific email reminder to encourage Sponsors approximately 2 months before a weekend.

Have Secretariat write a personal thank you note to Sponsors after a Weekend so that they feel valued.

How to Connect an Interested Candidate to a Sponsor

This can be challenging if the Candidate is not Anglican. How do we introduce Cursillo to the Candidate's priest/minister/pastor?

It is harder to Sponsor/Mentor a Candidate if you do not know them.

Web requests are sent to the Pre-Cursillo Coordinator. This does not mean the Pre-Cursillo Coordinator is required to sponsor the Candidate.

Recommendations:

Create a pamphlet describing the Cursillo method to give to non-Anglican potential Candidates and their priests/ministers/pastors.

Create a process whereby any web request has a follow up and a way to connect Sponsors and Candidates.

Use the Parish Representatives to make connections between Sponsors and interested Candidates.

Define Gift of Love

There is not a current definition for the Gift of Love in the OACM Handbook.

Recommendations:

Add "Gift of Love" Term to Appendix A – Glossary of Terms:

All Weekends are prepaid under the "Gift of Love" program. Each Weekend is a "gift" to the Weekend Participants from the Cursillo Community. Cursillistas may make donations to this program at any time. At the end of a Weekend, Candidates and Team Members are encouraged to make a contribution to "pay forward" this Gift of Love so that others may attend future Weekends. Tax receipts are issued for all Gift of Love donations.

Alternatives if the Parish Priest is Not Supportive of Cursillo

Recommendations:

In the event that the parish clergy does not support OACM, further action can be taken by the Team/Secretariat to determine suitability. Sponsors can be made aware that an alternate process may be available through Secretariat.

Add to the Application form "If there are issues getting clergy approval, please contact the Pre-Cursillo Coordinator."

Add a self-declaration by the Candidate on a supplemental application form. The Sponsor can request this form from Secretariat/Pre-Cursillo Coordinator.

For example, I _____ am an active member of my faith community, and am physically able, emotionally stable, and free from substance abuse problems. My Sponsor has outlined the expectations of the weekend.

Signature _____ Date _____

Recommendations re: Documents

Update the OACM Handbook sections and appendices as per the Updated documents.

Update the OACM Website – Sponsorship page to include a link to the Sponsorship brochure, OACM Handbook Appendix L1.

Update the OACM Application form on the website.

Approval Requests

Approve the updated Sponsorship brochure, OACM Handbook Appendix L1.

Approve the updated Application form, OACM Handbook Appendix L2.

Approve the supplemental self-declaration form.

Approve updates recommended by the Pre-Cursillo Coordinator, OACM Handbook Appendix J6

Cursillo Weekend

Place

- It is important that each candidate and each team member have their own bedroom, and Galilee House comfortably accommodated 19 team members and 17 New Cursillistas. However, some team members may be quite happy to share, which would free up a room for a candidate.
- The 'Rollo room' was too small & inadequate for our requirements as some table communities can be quite loud, and the lighting and overall acoustics were not good. (This may have played a huge part in the value of getting outside on this weekend.)
- A further reduction in team and candidates is recommended if we are to use Galilee House again.

Time of Year

- Given that late September would be optimum weather-wise, practicalities must be given consideration here. Early OCTOBER, or APRIL, or MAY was thought the better choice, with school terms, work commitments, & summer holidays etc factored in, (Not November.)
- It was thought vitally important to book 1-2 years in advance to retain our 1st choice of date. (Yes, what if the sky should fall, etc, before then? - We stand by this statement.)

Content and Weekend Format

- It is a given that Cursillo must retain its essential elements to remain Cursillo. The current 3-day Weekend seems better than the old four-day weekend. However, could we explore ways to combine some of the talks that sometimes repeat themselves? Some of the Rollos could be combined to release space for personal time and for activities like walking a LABYRINTH. (Galilee House has a beauty!)

- The Rollos GRACE, LAITY, FAITH, & PIETY could be rolled into two Rollos. Also, C.C.I.A. & ENVIRONMENTS could be combined, and there may be others that could be combined.
- Another option could be that Rollistas could opt to undertake two Rollos, but not Kitchen or Palanca as their job is already vast.
- Remove or considerably shorten the Teaching Eucharist and have more free time. This time spent with The Holy Spirit rejuvenated both the team and the new Cursillistas and remains a memorable part of the weekend for everyone.
- Instead of FeedBack from every table, it may be voluntarily given, and the option to PASS given. (Each table could be given a PASS card to use once a day?) ? This may free up some time and it also means that we could have a slightly smaller team, which would leave more bedrooms open to candidates.
- Making Posters is an important tool for learning, expressing ideas, and cooperation in building relationships, so should stay wherever possible.
- As has already been discussed above, more day-light free time, (in chunks of 1 hour, not just the odd 10-minute 'potty break'?) could be allowed so that new Cursillistas and the team have breathing spaces. Yes, this could add an extra 2-3 hours to be found from somewhere.
- We looked in detail at alternate formats to accommodate different lifestyles. (Parents with young children, &/or full-time employment.) For example, maybe 3 Saturdays, plus a 2-day (1 night) Weekend? Or, Several evenings (8?) plus a 2 day, (1 night) Weekend? Or, ZOOM – online or self-paced, for some pre-Weekend materials plus condensed Weekend. HOWEVER, these are not The Cursillo Method which is a residential programme with a specific 'flow' by design.
- Keep the invasion in a local church. This supports the local church & negates the need for secrecy on Sunday afternoon. It means no refreshments afterward.

What does the Cursillo Weekend NEED?

- Time to pray independently,
- Time to reflect on the teachings, both alone and in the community.
- Time to be in nature, which is lovely & enhances the experience, but it was felt by some that Cursillo would still be Cursillo without this.

- Relationship building on the Weekend - with other candidates in shared meals, and team activities such as table discussions, creating posters & other things such as creating something for the Fiesta, and writing a community prayer for the Closing Ceremony. Praying together.
- Relationship building in the broader community with the Mananita, and with the Invasion
- Palanca Indicators, could some PI start to arrive for candidates before the Weekend starts? Maybe delivered through their parishes? would be a wonderful gift and foretaste of what is to come!
- Opportunities to develop as a leader within the following - in helping with the fiesta, (what other opportunities are there to encourage people not to take themselves too seriously in sharing their faith?) and in helping formulate responses to the Rollos etc.
- Music is essential to the Weekend, either live or electric.
- The Eucharist.
- Healing.
- Confession.
- Worship.

Secrecy needs to go

- Cursillo has improved a great deal in being more 'open', however, improvements still need to be made and more could be shared with the candidates. For example;
- We could briefly talk about the fiesta on Saturday night after supper.
- We could briefly mention that "There will be a gentle, little surprise on Sunday morning, so if you want to pop your head out of your bedroom door to see" – No more detail than that. (It is like we all know Christmas Day will arrive with gifts, etc, but we don't know what the gifts are!) So many Cusillistas still regret not opening their bedroom door for the Mananita.
- Enthusiastic & knowledgeable people could visit church communities to introduce the idea of Cursillo and talk about upcoming Weekends. This used to happen.

Rules regarding Personnel, team, and candidates

- We acknowledge that rules were established for a reason, but does that reason still apply all these decades later? Is it time they were revisited to check their relevance today?
- These rules and regulations were revised two years ago by the Secretariat in consultation with National Cursillo.)

We recommend further, smaller & more personal events

- besides the Welcome Back be planned for New Cursillistas, something between an Ultreya and a small group reunion, and involving their sponsors.
- More could be done to educate sponsors on their responsibilities for Post Weekend. There are always big left-over questions, and sometimes the support from sponsors is not there.
- Consideration could be given to moving away from a sponsor model. Is there a possibility of leveraging existing group reunions that could collectively invite people from their church to join their group? This new participant could start 'Grouping' with the existing group before going on a Weekend.
- New Cursillistas could be encouraged to bring a friend to the welcome back service, (with registration forms and info about the Weekend at the service.)

We propose

- that when a new Lay Rector has agreed to take up their position, several of the previous Lay Rectors put something in place for a celebratory get-together to proclaim that there is a tangible support system in place for the inevitable questions on how to proceed. There would be regular contact points in place for encouragement and support.

Group Reunions

The main goal of Cursillo is to equip people in their Christian ministry. The primary way that is done in the Fourth Day is through Group Reunion.

“The objective of Group Reunion is to emphasize the value of personal contact and sharing with other Christians, and to motivate the candidates to continue to do so after the weekend.” (from the Lay Talk workbook)

The main focus of our Group Reunion Committee was around finding ways to encourage new Cursillistas to form group reunions after the weekend and help them to do so. We also looked at ways to help existing Cursillistas find a group to join, or form a new group if needed.

PROPOSALS:

P1 On the weekend, as part of the Group Reunion Rollo the table groups would:

- a) form a group reunion and share using the yellow card
- b) be encouraged to continue as a group reunion for 6 months after the weekend
- c) set up a date and time to hold their first group reunion after the weekend, which should happen within a month of the weekend. These meetings should be at least monthly, but could be weekly, at the discretion of each group. We encourage groups to start out online, as it allows people to join without worrying about travel.
- d) ask one person to take the lead on organizing the first group reunion, sending out a reminder prior to the first reunion. Moving forward, this task could be shared amongst the group.
- e) This group reunion would be for the new Cursillistas. Table Enablers would help facilitate this creation of an ongoing table group reunion, but not necessarily continue as part of the group, since they may already be in their own group reunion.

P2 We recommend to Secretariat that a new role be created, called a Group Reunion Coordinator (GRC).

The role of the GRC is to facilitate the formation of new GR groups in two ways:

- a) through support of the table groups formed following the weekend, and
- b)** through matching people who have inquired about joining a group.

GRC is a resource person, with a 2 year term and a possible 2 year extension.

- c) They are appointed by Secretariat.
- d) They report to Secretariat when invited, but do not have to attend the monthly meetings.

Duties of the GRC:

GRC would have their own OACM email address and would check this email on a weekly basis.

Two main areas of GRC responsibility:

After a Cursillo Weekend,

- a) GRC would check in with the members of the new weekend groups, via email, at month 5.
- b) They would be checking to find out if the group is working and whether the candidates think it will continue beyond month 6 or whether some members wish to join a new group.

In response to inquiries from the Community:

- a) GRC would first send a questionnaire to the person inquiring about a group
- b) GRC would match people with existing groups or help them form new groups, using the information provided in the questionnaire.

GRC Recommended Skills:

- a) Computer literate, comfortable with data lists/databases
- b) Email savvy

- c) Experience with PDF forms/Word forms that can be completed online and returned or printed
- d) Active listening skills an asset

GRC Recommended Qualities and Experience

- a) Lay or Clergy
- b) Able to answer questions about what group reunions are and their value
- c) Have some experience being in a group reunion

General Comments:

- a) Recommended group size is 4-6 people.
- b) Groups are set up on a trial basis.
- c) For any new groups that are formed within the Community, the GRC would check in with the group around month 5.

Other comments:

>Potential GRC duty: Keep list of resource people, such as technical 'Zoomers', willing to share tech knowledge. Perhaps somebody else has or would develop such a list?

>Month 5's email could be developed as a template

P3 In Weekend envelopes, along with the Group Reunion yellow card, include a **"Welcome to your Fourth Day"** letter which would:

- a) provide link to the Canadian Anglican Cursillo Secretariat (CACS) Group Reunion information
- b) include the sentence: "If there are any concerns with your group reunion, please know that you can contact the GRC at their OACM email address (to be developed).

P4 Develop a questionnaire that can be sent out to existing cursillistas looking to be in a Group Reunion.

The group reunion committee has a first draft, if and when needed.

Follow-up activities:

- a) This new role removes this responsibility from the Lay Director and Fourth Day coordinator.
- b) Website to be updated to reflect that group reunion inquiries should be sent to GRC
- c) OACM handbook to be updated to add the GRC role
- d) Promote the role of this new GRC resource.

Group Reunions do not last forever; they change and grow, just as people do. They can take many shapes. When a group disbands, or when a group no longer fits the group's needs, it is time to find a new group. That is where the Group Reunion Coordinator's role will help.

Education

Our mandate and what it means

Our Committee's area of focus is Education. More specifically, creating educational activities for Cursillistas to continue gaining knowledge and growing in faith. The education mandate of the Secretariat is the responsibility of the person with the "Leaders' School & Servant Community" portfolio. Educational events would be under this mandate. Bishop Shane Parker sees educational opportunities for priests to partner with Cursillo leaders in initiating parish ministry.

Ideas and Recommendations

Between December 2023 and March 2024, the Education Working Group met to discuss what educational activities we could provide to Cursillistas. The three ideas we wish to present range from 10 minutes to two days. More details on each idea follow in the

Recommendations sub section.

- Set aside approximately 10-15 minutes at each Ultreya for the presentation of a theme (mini-rollo / vignette). This is in addition to the witness talk.
- Hold a one-day symposium with multiple sessions on topics of interest to the Cursillo Community.
- A residential weekend from Saturday morning until Sunday afternoon using a Cursillo weekend as a model. Have table communities, hear rollos, have discussion and enjoy music

Recommendation 1:

- Mini-rollo / Vignette It is suggested that approximately 5-10 minutes be reserved at each Ultreya (Prayer and Praise) for presentations on Educational Themes, such as:
 - How to start a group reunion;
 - How to start and design a parish bible study group;
 - Spiritual direction;
 - Education for Ministry (EFM);
 - ALPHA;
 - Educational Webinars;
 - Quiet Days;

- “Action” projects;
- contextual mission update;
- or any other topic that is deemed appropriate

Recommendation 2:

- The Symposium Day would be structured similar to the May 6 Workshop, only this time, there would be different Educational topics that would be of interest to the Cursillo Community.
- This Symposium Day would follow the outline of the Encounters with Christ days organized by Sharon Fleming. The day would run from 9AM – 4PM on a Saturday, starting with a presentation and having three or four sessions.
- There would be opportunity to break into small discussion groups and report back to a Plenary session

Recommendation 3:

- This would be a two-day retreat for Cursillistas to learn and share ideas to reinvigorate their Fourth Day.
- Location: If residential – Galilee Centre, Ottawa Valley Pentecostal Camp, (Cobden, ON), l’Ermitage convent (on Montreal’s West Island), Bethesda Renewal Centre If not residential – in a local church with appropriate facilities (plenary space, kitchen, break out rooms, adequate free parking)
- Timing: Day #1 (arrival 9/10AM) – includes Lunch and Dinner Day #2 (departure 4PM) – includes Breakfast and Lunch
- Dates: June – October weekend or weekdays
- Registration: 20–30 people (as facilities permit) with payment to cover the retreat costs including meals and accommodation

Program:

- Similar format to a Cursillo weekend in that it includes music, small group discussion, worship, and talks.

- Following each talk, break into small groups to discuss the talk and come up with concrete ideas and suggestions.
- Suggested time 30 – 45 minutes.
- Talks on topics of interest to Cursillistas should be thought-provoking and action-oriented and may include:
 - How can we live our baptismal vow “to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation, and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth?” Looking for specifics for individuals, families, parishes,
 - Group Reunions. What formats have worked for Group Reunions?
 - Spiritual Direction: what are Cursillistas looking for and how can it be accessed?
 - How can Cursillo, an educational ministry within our diocese, support parishes and their priests to educate their congregations?
 - How can we meet the needs of those looking to join or expand a Group Reunion

Logistics:

- An organizing committee to oversee the program and to handle facilities, registration, and identifying speakers.
- A Kitchen team to prepare meals/snacks/ drinks and clean up

Secretariat support:

- Musica to organize music.
- Spiritual Directors to organize worship.
- Treasurer to handle payment for registrants.

Further Reflections

- Communication was identified as major challenge for OACM.
 - a) Identify parish representatives, past lay rectors and other leaders to work with sponsors in mentoring new Cursillistas and encouraging their forming Group Reunions and participating in OACM events.

- b) Consider creating an ad hoc committee of Secretariat to facilitate the formation of and regular communication with Group Reunions. This type of communication would support the Leaders' School & Servant Community Director in designing and planning educational activities.
- c) Consider ways to stay connected to Cursillistas who aren't in a Group Reunion. Should recent lay rectors e-mail their team and Cursillistas to link them to The Rainbow.
- **Event planning** is the major way in which we provide educational opportunities to Cursillistas.
 - a) Plan activities with "contextual mission" in mind. "Contextual mission" is carrying out ministry in the changing environment.
 - b) When choosing leaders for talks, consider individuals who are solid in their delivery and will follow the chosen theme.
 - c) Consider a hybrid model of workshop.
 - d) Consider rural, suburban and urban locations when planning events.
 - e) Consider what educational topics would be of interest to Cursillistas. Emphasizing on the importance on hearing from others and engaging them during the process
 - f) Consider whether our audience should be exclusively Cursillistas. Should we consider including people who are Christian leaders and potential Cursillistas?
 - g) Day of Deeper Understanding has not been accomplishing its initial mandate

Miscellaneous

- a) The importance of having clergy and laity being willing and ready to serve on a team. Encourage OACM Spiritual Directors to be active in sponsoring clergy to attend a weekend.
- b) How to grow Men's group/Women's group/ Mixed group in your parish.

- c) What steps can be taken so that all parishioners have access to opportunities to use their gifts. Consider linking Cursillistas with newcomers in the parish.
- d) Consider creating opportunities to partner with other Cursillo Movements and communities (Anglican/Catholics, First Nations). Another way to be more inclusive

Inclusivity

OACM needs to be more inclusive to meet the needs of all people. In November 2023, Rev. Gary van Der Meer joined Secretariat to discuss inclusivity in cursillo. Below are some of the comments discussed.

- Gary suggested that we “test balloon” coEd weekend or Non-Binary weekend open to all and see who comes forward as leaders.
- Gary suggested that one or the other weekend be inclusive but not both
- Should setup a small committee to discuss how to move forward
- More education required
- Elizabeth and Jon suggested ‘normal’ year alternating with ‘non-binary’ years
- How do we promote Cursillo for the younger generations? “Mixed Cursillos” in the US. Gabrielle gets online info for education re: LGBT2+ non-gendered weekends as opposed to CoEd.

Clericus Visits

Southwest Deanery – Nov 14, 2023

Not all the members of the group were present, but Ken Davis has offered to forward Jon's questions so we may get more responses. I sent him the questions as well as my notes, as below.

1. Would you be interested in attending a Cursillo weekend (if you haven't already)?
2. Would you be willing to promote participation within your congregation?
3. Are there any concerns that would make you not want to attend, or encourage participation for a Cursillo weekend?
4. What changes would you need to see in order to feel more comfortable promoting, or attending a weekend?

Here is a summary of what I heard at our discussion:

- Most people in the group have had experience of Cursillo, usually starting with a weekend. While some negative aspects were talked about, I don't think there was any animosity or resistance.
- One person talked about being in a parish where the cursillistas, (those who have experienced a weekend), were a small, mainly elderly, group who were bonded closely together as an 'elite' group. They did not appear to encourage others to join.
- It can be difficult for a clergy person to go on a weekend as a candidate. It is hard to share openly. Lay people can tend to give way to clergy. Perhaps this could be helped by putting clergy with other clergy at a table group. A separate weekend for clergy could offer more freedom.
- An easy avenue for interested people to find a sponsor is needed. (Note: sponsorship and facilitating access is one of the things our group is currently examining.

We then spent a little time on the specific questions.

1. Most have already attended. We ought also to ask if there is willingness to be part of a team.
2. Concerns: different spiritual approaches and types of worship appeal to different people. Cursillo may offer one particular approach. More diversity in worship on a weekend would be worth looking into.
3. We did not explicitly discuss changes. I would think a more transparent and inclusive approach would be desired. Making the whole process of taking part easier would be good.

Ottawa West – Dec 12, 2023

1. They would be open to promoting Cursillo within their parishes however there are some concerns...
2. The current Cursillo weekend is structured around an “extroverted experience”. There’s a lot of music, conversation, and a lot of doing things. If there was room for contemplation, reflection, and introvert things (like Ignation practices) it might appeal to some.
3. The weekend creates a “mountain top” experience that sends people home with unreasonable expectations for parish life. The every day life of a parish church cannot hope to compete with a retreat weekend experience where everyone is deeply engaged.
4. There has to be something in place so there isn’t a “drop off” after the weekend. The post weekend time must be as engaging as the weekend.
5. Could the weekend experience have a bit more overlap with parish reality...diversity of worship styles...diversity of music styles.
 - f) Be more open and welcoming to people who haven’t gone on a weekend. Invite us to Ultreyas so we can try it out and see if it is a fit. If a parish is hosting an Ultreya, invite the parish as well as the Cursillo folks.

January 2024

I met with the deanery that includes St. Thomas, Alta Vista, St. Aidan’s, etc. I don’t remember what they’re called now. Here was the feedback:

1. What is Cursillo? I've heard of it, but nobody will ever give me a clear answer on what it is and what happens on the weekends?

2. Family commitments make it hard to get away for the weekend by myself.

3. It seems really "cult-y". You guys have a bunch of weird language, things are presented as secretive, and all we're told is, "You'll have to come and see."

4. How do we trust you? There's a checkered history when it comes to the Queer community and anything progressive, in my own parish it seems like you scratch the surface and there is the worst of radically conservative evangelicalism...It feels like a secret club...that also appears very outdated.

5. Folks are looking for an immersive religious experience, I'd be willing to promote it if I knew it was transparent and safe

6. Are needs around education, formation, and contemplations, centering prayer, and other experiential practices being met elsewhere?

If I promoted cursillo in my parish, without there being a clearly expressed promise to the Queer community that it was now safe and fully inclusive, I'd lose all credibility with my parish and I wouldn't be able to work there anymore. Do not underestimate the negative impression that the past days of conservative evangelicals left on us. Many left with ANiC...but we're still uncertain.

Cursillo Feedback – Deanery of East Ontario

- Being away for an entire weekend is hard on families with multiple responsibilities
- Can't we just build our own diocesan version where we have control of content and based on context
- We would not have recognized the current cursillo as being about leadership training
- We've experienced losing key parish leadership to cursillo as they'd rather be there
- Communications have been spotty, don't know what's going on, no follow up for 4th day group, etc.
- Too many Saturdays given up to build the team
- Could we develop something that goes deeper theologically (stages of faith, cursillo goes to stage 1 or two at best)
- Cursillo is good, but are there other things that can compliment it, have some variety, what are other places doing
- Get rid of the gendered things, remove substitutionary atonement theology, music should have some actual theological rigor
- I'd want to see the content before I could support it
- Location...can we move it around?
- I would need to hear a compelling case as to why I would send my parishioners to as opposed to doing it myself, or sending them somewhere else
- Should we have gender specific weekends, yes. And should we also have non-specific weekends, also yes
- The topics themselves need to address current day topics
- What is the purpose: leadership development? Discernment? Pastoral? Evangelism?
- Is it just dated? We've shifted a lot over the past decades, has cursillo
- What is the institutional identity? What is it? Community ministry of Ottawa? Para-Church?