

Canadian Anglican Cursillo



CURSILLO AND THE CLERGY

THE PURPOSE OF CURSILLO

Cursillo presents a method of living as Christians in the world. It is a tool that can be used to structure our lives as Christians so as to be able to make a difference in the world through evangelizing environments for Christ. The Cursillo Movement is a ministry of the Church designed to help the Laity understand their individual callings to be Christian leaders in the church, in the workplace, in family and social life, and leisure activities. The Cursillo Method consists of three equally important facets:

- Identification of potential areas in community life to be influenced by the Gospel.
- The Three-Day Cursillo Weekend.
- The follow-up support system that focuses attention on Christian action through faith and study.

Cursillo seeks to serve the whole Church. It seeks to equip Christians to be the church wherever they are, and in whatever stream of tradition or theology they resonate. The Cursillo Weekend Event is a short course on Christianity that includes 15 talks by Laity and Clergy on Christian life, concentrating on the experience of open relationship with God and others, as much as on the presentation of a simple method for living the Gospel. The Cursillo Weekend is not the *raison d'être* of Cursillo, but rather one step in a journey of enabling people to grow in their faith and ministry. Following the Weekend, people are encouraged to continue their experience in small groups on a regular basis. These Groups Reunions are not exclusive and may include people who have not attended a Weekend themselves. These Group Reunions provide support and encouragement through sharing of members Christian journeys, specifically in the areas of prayer, study and Christian action. From time-to-time there may also be regular gatherings of the larger Cursillo Community (Ultreyas) to which all are welcome.

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Although Cursillo emphasizes the ministry of the Laity, the role of Clergy (at all levels) in the Movement is of utmost importance. Both Laity and Clergy have clearly defined roles, and mutual support and team-work is essential for the health of the Movement and the ministry of the Church. The role of Clergy, who seek to be a healing and empowering force in the Church, is definite and profound in all aspects of Cursillo ministry. In Cursillo, the sacramental life is central, and the priestly function within the community is fundamental. On the Cursillo Weekend, Clergy call on the Lord's priestly gifts as a personal resource and spiritual advisor in

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the teaching doctrine and Christian living.

The Canadian Anglican Cursillo Movement (CAC) is authorized and contingent upon the Letter of Agreement with the National Episcopalian Cursillo Secretariat (NEC- *see Letter of Agreement signed May 1989* in the CACS Library). Each Diocesan Cursillo Movement operates under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop as well as the Constitution, By-laws and Guidelines of NEC and the Canadian Anglican Cursillo Secretariat (CACS). Cursillo is at the disposal of the Bishop's Pastoral Plan for each particular Diocese, as a ministry of the Church. The activities of the Movement in each Diocese are coordinated through a local Secretariat. This Secretariat usually consists of a Lay Director, appointed by the Bishop, along with a Spiritual Director, appointed by the Bishop from the Clergy, a Secretary, a Treasurer and Committee Chairs elected from the Community and approved by the Bishop, responsible for such ongoing functions of Cursillo life in the community as Pre-and Post-Cursillo activities, Weekends, and prayer support.

This conscious offering of ministry by the Cursillo Method is at the service of the Church. All priests who have not attended a Cursillo Weekend are encouraged to do so as valuable insights will be gained both into what Cursillo means to those who have participated and into a deeper understanding of how the Movement can have a positive effect on both laity and Clergy in parish life, growth, and renewal.

ROLES OF CLERGY IN CURSILLO

The Parish Priest is given the guidance and authority of the Holy Spirit in leading the spiritual life and development of people and community. There are many roles that the Parish Priest might take to further the Cursillo ministry in the Parish and beyond.

Within the Parish:

The Parish Priest can further the spiritual development of all parishioners, including Cursillistas, by:

- Being aware of the potential of the Cursillo method to enrich the life of the parish and being willing to assist and affirm such ministry.
- Personal example and leadership in the encouragement in supporting the ministry of the Movement in the Parish.
- Taking an active role in the discernment of potential candidates and their sponsorship.

Beyond the Parish:

In addition to living out their lives in the Parish and in the wider community influencing environments for Christ, Cursillistas may be involved in the wider Cursillo Community through participation in Group Reunions, Ultreyas, Weekend Teams, Secretariat, and National Secretariat. Clergy should remain open and supportive of such involvement. It is important for Clergy to familiarize themselves with the method and where possible become fully immersed in it by participating in a Weekend as a candidate. Clergy find that it is a privilege to participate together in a Group Reunion with others who can also share their failures and successes, along with their calling.

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IN CONCLUSION

Cursillo seeks to add depth and understanding, and a way of growing deeper, and being part of the transformation of the world by individual Christians. Through its focus on small groups, and leadership development it can be a useful tool for parish growth and renewal.

Given the import and scope of this ministry, it is advisable that Clergy who are involved in Cursillo or wish to be, should be familiar with the movement and its methodology and the best way to do this is by participating as a candidate on a Cursillo Weekend.

If opposition to Cursillo occurs, regardless of the source, Lay or Clerical, it needs to be dealt with prayerfully and expeditiously. Disquieted persons should be approached with an attitude of grace to determine the source of their unease and through prayer and discussion attempt to clarify the issues with an emphasis on principals rather than personalities. In all cases it is vitally important to discern the will of God in prayer, and to seek Grace to follow His will. In the end, the issue may have to be left quietly and confidentially in the hands of God, Cursillo has never claimed to be a spiritual panacea or appeal to all persons.

The role of Cursillo within a parish's pastoral plan may differ from parish to parish. This conscious offering of ministry by the Cursillo method is at the service of the Church. If Cursillo is not active in your Diocese and you are interested in renewing or initiating this ministry, contact your Bishop, or the Canadian Anglican Cursillo Secretariat (*see* the Web Site www.anglicancursillo.com).

Bibliography and Further Reading

CACS Library: May be downloaded from the CACS Web Site at anglicancursillo.com

- *Cursillo and the Sponsorship Function of the Clergy*
- *The Role and Function of Clergy Beyond the Parish*
- *The Role and Function of Clergy Within the Parish*

NEC Library: Contact your local Secretariat or see the NEC website at nationalepiscopalcursillo.org

- *What is Cursillo?*
- *Spiritual Direction*
- *Sponsorship*
- *Role of Clergy*
- *By-Laws and Legal Documents of the NEC*
- *Cursillo Information Day-Clergy (CID/C) - Clergy Workshop.*