

Canadian Anglican Cursillo

ALPHA AND CURSILLO



The Holy Spirit empowers the Church in so many ways to be the voice and heart of God. In recent years (as measured by God), two "movements" of the Spirit have helped many both in the Church and those who are "faraway" to discover God's love and call: ALPHA and CURSILLO. In many parishes, both are flourishing and there are a number of questions being asked concerning these two "methods" of evangelism: what should the relationship be between the two and how can ALPHA and CURSILLO partner in parishes to the glory of God and for the building of the kingdom?

ALPHA began at Holy Trinity Church in Brompton England and under the leadership of Sandy Millar and Nicky Gumbel grew from a small "church group" into the worldwide tool for evangelism it is today. ALPHA is designed to be a practical introduction to the Christian faith and was developed initially for the non-churchgoers, newcomers to the Faith and as a refresher course for the "mature Christians". CURSILLO's original mandate, developed in Spain at the end of the Spanish Civil War, was to reach the "faraway" (Eduardo Bonin's phrase), persons who had either no contact with the Church or who had fallen away from the Faith. Both CURSILLO and ALPHA have been blessings to the church and the world, even as they move beyond their original mandates.

In many parishes, the leadership for ALPHA is drawn from the Cursillo community, in response to the CURSILLO urging to "bring others to Christ". ALPHA becomes, for many, the steppingstone to CURSILLO and it is with this progression that this guideline has been developed.

The zeal of Cursillistas is well known and to be applauded.

But, we must caution Cursillistas and the CURSILLO movement not to see ALPHA as the incubator for the candidates for CURSILLO weekends. Too often, enthusiasts approach brothers and sisters immediately after an ALPHA course has been completed, urging them to become candidates on a CURSILLO weekend. **If ALPHA is an introduction to the Christian faith, the planting of the seed of the Word in the hearts and minds of our sisters and brothers, then there must be a sufficient time between the seeding of ALPHA and the "transplanting" into CURSILLO.**

In his first letter to the Church, St. Peter says, "Like the newborn infants that you are, you must crave for pure milk (spiritual milk I mean) so that you may thrive upon it to your soul's health. Surely you have tasted that the Lord is good" (1 Peter 2:2,3). Similarly, Paul states,...

Alpha and Cursillo

"I gave you milk to drink, instead of solid food, for which you were not yet ready" (1 Corinthians 3:2). Jesus tells a story about seed growing in secret and the farmer needing to wait until the shoot has reached

a certain maturity before it is harvested (Mark 4:26-29). This is the approach we suggest be taken in the relationship between ALPHA and CURSILLO.