



## CURSILLO AND THE SPONSORSHIP FUNCTION OF THE CLERGY

This guideline is presented to assist you, as clergy, in understanding your role when you are asked to sign sponsorship applications for candidates for Cursillo Weekends.

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 (see CACS Guideline on **Cursillo and the Clergy**). The Cursillo Movement is a Lay-led ministry of the Church which is dependent on the support and encouragement of the Clergy. It is designed to help the Laity understand their individual callings to be Christian leaders in the Church, in the workplace, community, family and social life, and leisure activities. The Cursillo Method consists of three equally important facets:

- Identification of potential areas in 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.

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.

There are many roles that the Parish Priest might take to further the Cursillo ministry in the Parish and beyond (*see* CACS Guidelines on **The Role and Function of Clergy Within and Beyond the Parish**).

One of the basic concepts to understand about Cursillo is that of the mechanism by which one becomes involved in the Movement, i.e., becomes a Cursillista.

The first step in the process is the identification and sponsorship of Potential Candidates who may then go on to complete a Three-Day Weekend (*see* CACS Guideline **The Three-Day Weekend**). The Weekend is essentially a short course on Christianity which involves 15 talks by Laity and Clergy on living out our lives as Christians. Following the Weekend, Cursillistas are encouraged to meet in small groups on a regular basis for support and confirmation in sharing their Christian journeys through discussion of personal experiences in the areas of prayer, study and action (Group Reunions). From time to time there may also be larger gatherings of the Cursillo Community (Ultreyas) to which all are welcome.

Who are these potential candidates? The most appropriate persons are those who are able and wish to understand the truth of the Gospel, and are able to help others understand it.

It is important to keep in mind that those who come into the Movement come in with their eyes open to the social environments surrounding them. Otherwise, they may seek only solutions to their personal needs.

The search for potential candidates is a matter of discernment; before speaking to a person about God, we should speak to God about that person. Any Cursillista in the Parish may sponsor a potential candidate. It is recommended that Sponsors be active in Parish life, and the Cursillo Movement. As part of the discernment process a Sponsor should seek the advice of the individual's pastor as to his/her suitability before any commitment is made. Sponsoring of candidates should be considered only after due thought and prayer have been given to the suitability.

The role of the sponsor is not to be taken lightly and involves more than the identification and preparation of potential candidates (*see* CACS Guideline on **Sponsoring and Sponsorship and Role of the Clergy Within and Beyond the Parish**). Clergy should be prepared to understand the role of sponsoring and sponsorship and assist sponsors in identifying, preparing and supporting Candidates and new Cursillistas.

Although everyone has the right to a full Christian life, Cursillo may not be the best means for every person to achieve that goal. Some people should probably not become involved at particular times in their lives. Others who should wait to become involved are those who have serious health or addiction problems, who have recently gone through a crisis that would prevent them from concentrating on the message of the weekend, or do not regard themselves as Christian believers.

Once it has been discerned that a person may be a possible candidate, he or she may then be approached through personal contact to invite them to participate in a Weekend. The Sponsor should explain the purpose and process of the entire method, including the Weekend, the nature and importance of the Fourth Day, and support available in the community, the clergy and through Group Reunions and Ultreya. Should the person agree to continue, the Sponsor then completes the necessary application details in concert with the individual and the individual's Parish Priest.

### **The Role of the Clergy in Sponsorship may be summarized as follows:**

- Candidates for a Cursillo weekend are sponsored by others involved in the Cursillo Movement. You, as pastor, will be asked to assess the appropriateness of a person attending a Cursillo weekend.
- You may know reasons why a person should not attend a weekend, such as family, medical, or spiritual turmoil, which may be unknown to the sponsor. The Cursillo Weekend is not intended to provide solutions for people presently experiencing serious problems. Ideal candidates are mature Christians who are able to influence their environments for Christ. Your assessment **is not** just a rubber stamp.
- If the candidate is suitable to attend a weekend, sign the application form. If not, advise the sponsor that this may not be the appropriate time for the individual concerned.
- You can assist in actively seeking out and identifying the potential leaders of the parish and of other environments in the community, and encouraging the Cursillistas

in the parish to befriend them and invite them to join a group, or attend a Weekend.

Cursillo seeks to add depth and understanding to the Christian life, and provide 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 should be familiar with the movement and its methodology. The best way to do this is by participating as a candidate on a Cursillo Weekend.

### **Bibliography and Further Reading**

**CACS Library** (may be downloaded from the CACS Web Site [anglicancursillo.com](http://anglicancursillo.com))

*Sponsoring and Sponsorship*  
*The Role and Function of Clergy within and beyond the Parish*  
*The Three Day Weekend*

**NECS Library** (contact your local Secretariat or see the NECS Web Site at [www.nationalepiscopalcurisillo.org](http://www.nationalepiscopalcurisillo.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.*