

Canadian Anglican Cursillo

DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN: A SUGGESTED APPROACH



What is a Pastoral Plan?

A pastoral plan is based on an analysis of the diocese and its secular environment. It identifies the goals the diocese wishes to achieve, the methods that will be used to achieve them and the target dates by which various goals will be accomplished.

"Pastoral Plan" is not a common Anglican term. A diocese may have a plan of action with a different title. It is important that the diocese has a concrete vision of where it is going and how it is going to get there.

A pastoral plan enables many people to focus their energy and talents on shared goals and to evaluate their successes and failures satisfactorily.

Introduction

On the basis of the definition, we know that the fundamental pastoral plan is a diocesan plan, not a Cursillo plan. Cursillo fits into the diocesan plan and depends upon it.

Cursillo should operate with a plan formed under the bishop's supervision. It should fit in with and serve the diocesan pastoral plan.

Some of our movements do not have explicit, written plans. On the other hand, components of a coherent plan usually do exist. Our Canadian movements plan to work in co-operation with the bishop and the diocese.

The priority of the Fourth Day is recognized, and we try to focus there. We recognize the claim of the world (environment) for our attention and endeavour to give it. All of this expresses allegiance to an incipient pastoral plan, authentically following Cursillo principles.

We need to develop explicit pastoral plans. These should identify the goals we want to achieve, the methods for achieving them and target dates for accomplishing each stage in the plan.

This paper is designed to help Diocesan Movements develop their own plans. It outlines the issues that need to be addressed and offers a practical approach that can be followed.

It is assumed that the primary impetus in forming a plan is coming from within the diocesan Secretariat.

We assume that the pastoral plan will be implemented primarily by group reunions and their individual members rather than by larger groups of Cursillistas. (The Cursillo Movement resists the temptation to become an organization with specific tasks.)

This paper assumes familiarity with and commitment to the material in the official literature dealing with Pastoral Plans, especially sections of the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry Pastoral Plan (2016) and parts of the brochure "The Cursillo Path" which sets out the fundamentals of the movement. These can be found at www.episcopalcursilloministry.org

The following section deals with the specific issues involved when the leadership of a new Movement seeks to develop a pastoral plan for Cursillo. The second section deals with the specific issues an already established movement may face. The final section continues the discussion and applies to both types of Diocesan Movements.

A New Diocesan Movement

An established Diocesan Cursillo often sponsors the diocese where interest has been shown in establishing Cursillo.

The movement should be introduced according to authentic norms, taking the time and the care necessary to build well for the future, consulting CACS "Guidelines for the Introduction of Cursillo into a Diocese." www.anglicancursillo.com These guidelines constitute the first stage of a new movement's pastoral plan.

Specifically, before the decision is made to introduce Cursillo and before members of the diocese make a weekend:

- Learn from the bishop and diocesan leaders where the diocese is going, including what the diocesan plan for the future is.
- Teach them what Cursillo is and what it has to offer.
- Evaluate together how Cursillo can serve diocesan objectives. (Introducing Cursillo might be counter-productive to the existing diocesan pastoral plan at any given time! If that is so, we need to recognize that and respect the informed judgement of the bishop and other diocesan leaders.)

Assuming that Cursillo is to be introduced:

- Develop a preliminary plan to establish Cursillo firmly (once again consulting CAC guidelines for introducing the Movement). Recognize the cost to other emphases in the diocese. Cursillo will require significant financial and human resources. Where will they come from?
- The primary focus should be on clergy and recognized lay leaders, including some regular worshippers who are "leaders" but who are not leaders in church organizations at present.

- The bishop and other diocesan leaders should be fully involved. They will be instrumental in deciding how Cursillo will be developed and used in the future.
- Plans should be carefully made to set the stage for future endeavours taking into account areas or parishes to emphasize in the diocese. Will group reunions be based primarily in the parish or externally such as in homes and coffee shops? Some effort should be made to keep decision making fluid rather than “set in stone”.

When Cursillo is firmly established, determine the movement's focus with diocesan leadership and accept that direction. The sponsoring diocese should be withdrawing by this stage.

Recognize that parishes, groups, and individual Cursillistas will have their own focuses. The Cursillo pastoral plan emphasizes certain priorities, but does not rule out other work.

An Established Diocesan Movement

This section deals with the issues involved when the leadership of an already existing Diocesan Movement seeks to develop a pastoral plan for Cursillo. Such a movement may differ significantly from the Cursillo ideal if it has been operating without a clearly articulated pastoral plan.

Corrections will be required within the movement itself.

- Does the style of the Weekend accomplish its purpose?
- Is sponsorship intentional, prayerful and thorough? (Ideally candidates are sponsored by groups or at least by individuals with the support of the respective groups.)
- Is an effective Servant Community taking its appropriate place within the movement? If a continuing Servant Community has been difficult to maintain, possibly due to great distances within the diocese, other methods of training may be helpful. eg. Extended team training? Part of Days of Deeper Understanding, or an extended Ultreya.
- What is the mind set of the Cursillistas? Do they focus on personal and parochial renewal or on transforming the world for Christ?
- Are the groups and Ultreyas functioning as they should? Do they fulfill Cursillo's intentions? Do most Cursillistas participate? Are new Cursillistas integrated into them?
- Group reunions could be centered in the community, rather than in the parish if this is not already the case. Corrections may be required in the relationship with the diocese.
- Are the bishop and diocesan leaders involved and informed? We want diocesan leaders to understand Cursillo and to be involved. We also want the Cursillo leadership to be in touch with the thinking and the direction of the diocese.

- What about the parish clergy?
- Are the lay Cursillistas mainly people who are involved in "church work" narrowly defined, or is there a good number of people whose Christian life and work are centered outside of their parishes?

Specific plans will need to be implemented to correct shortcomings identified in the two sections above. When this has been done adequately, determine the movement's focus with diocesan leadership and accept that direction.

Recognize that parishes, groups and individual Cursillistas will have their own focuses. The Cursillo pastoral plan emphasizes certain priorities but does not rule out other work.

The Development of a Cursillo Pastoral Plan with a Diocese

A Pastoral Plan may be primarily theoretical, expressing the principles and general purposes of the movement, or it may be primarily pragmatic, focusing on the specifics. It is best to follow the pragmatic approach because it is important to set out precisely what we want to accomplish, how we are going to do it and when we plan to have it completed. This assumes, however, that the theological basis for Cursillo and its method are clearly articulated and comprehended in other ways. A brief summary of this theological basis and of the method itself provides a useful introduction to the pastoral plan.

Ideally, the Cursillo pastoral plan should be published by the bishop. This should signify more than the bishop's approval and acceptance of the plan, but also leadership and involvement in its development. It should be developed and written by the Leaders' School or the Secretariat or a specific group within them, with input from the diocesan leadership.

The distinction between the diocesan pastoral plan and the Cursillo pastoral plan should be underlined. The Cursillo plan depends upon and serves the diocesan plan.

- The first step in developing the Cursillo pastoral plan is to learn what the diocesan pastoral plan is. Dioceses are generally quite business-like in developing their pastoral plans but if a diocese is transitioning to new episcopal oversight, a plan may not be fully in place.
- A variety of resources should be consulted including the Bishop, executive council, program officers, and anyone else who can help provide a sense of what is happening and where things are going.
- Then the Cursillo movement should seek from diocesan leaders who are informed about Cursillo and committed to it a sense of what Cursillo's role in the diocese is perceived to be at present.

- Cursillo may well be serving the diocese by helping it to understand its objectives and methods through this process. Obviously, if the diocese already has a clearly articulated pastoral plan (by whatever name) which it is following, then this stage of the process is much simpler. When a new diocesan pastoral plan is being developed, Cursillistas could be involved by attending open-invitation events or volunteering as part of a development committee or letting their names stand for election to a diocesan synod which may ultimately approve the plan.
- Then, following the diocesan pastoral plan and the bishop's instructions, Leaders' School develops the Cursillo pastoral plan under Secretariat's leadership. (If Leaders' School does not exist or is not strong, an ad hoc group might do this work under Secretariat's direction.)

The diocesan pastoral plan might take a form something like this:

- 1) The theology and method of Cursillo are expressed with reference to scripture, church teaching and the official literature. A list of background material could be provided (see Introduction above).
- 2) A realistic, informed analysis of the Cursillo movement in the diocese follows, honestly identifying both strengths and weaknesses.
- 3) A realistic, informed analysis of the diocese is the next step, including a summary of the diocesan pastoral plan.
- 4) A realistic, informed analysis of the wider secular community is necessary. This will be selective, identifying the most significant features and the areas of immediate and long-term priority on which Cursillo must work. This could include geographical areas or specific parishes.
- 5) This section integrates sections 2, 3, and 4 above, indicating where Cursillo will focus and how:
 - a) on its own, including the continued reforming of the movement itself to strengthen weaknesses identified in section 2 above but emphasizing work in the environments identified in section 4 in keeping with the diocesan priorities and resources.
 - b) in co-operation with other diocesan initiatives and resources, recognizing that Cursillo is not the only effective tool at the disposal of the diocese.
 - c) in co-operation with other groups, Christian and secular. In our contemporary society. Other Christian groups will often be seeking the same or similar transformations. We are concerned with results, not with credit flowing to the Cursillo movement or the Anglican Church. Co-operation with secular groups needs to be approached cautiously, in keeping with our purpose of transforming the world for Christ.
- 6) This section might contain the specific plans to implement the above, including anticipated dates of achievement for the next five years. Alternatively, this very specific material would be included in section 5 above.

Reporting, consultation, and input are useful at every stage but especially when the first draft has been completed. It should be presented to Cursillistas, the bishop and diocesan leaders and others for critique and advice. It should be revised and re-presented as often as necessary but the temptation to await perfection should be resisted! Producing the plan accomplishes little. *Implementing* it is what counts. It can be revised in the light of progress and experience.

Therefore, as soon as possible an adequate plan should be presented to the bishop and to the diocesan leadership as the bishop directs, so that the bishop may publish it and direct its implementation.