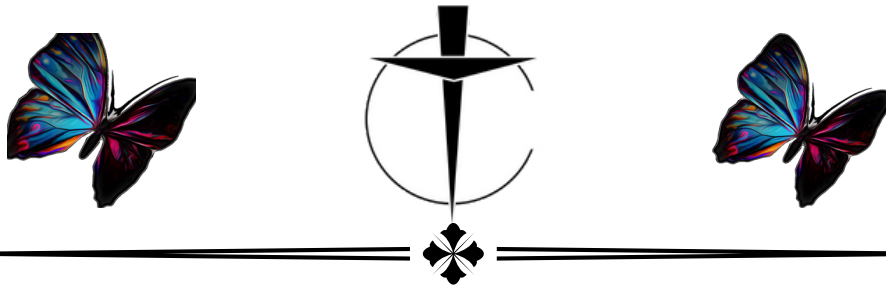


Chester **C**ursillo



Winter Newsletter 2022

Exciting news!!

After many years of trying to support Lichfield Diocese in restarting Cursillo in their Diocese, with limited success, Chester Secretariat proposed a more formal partnership between the Dioceses. This required the agreement of BACC and the Bishops of both Chester & Lichfield. I am delighted to announce that we now have everyone's agreement and blessing. Lichfield is now a 4th Day Community within Chester Diocese, they will operate under the Chester Cursillo constitution and members of Lichfield Diocese can serve on the Secretariat, thus gaining experience in running Cursillo in Lichfield. This arrangement will exist for 3 years in the first instance.

I'm sure you will join me in welcoming Lichfield Diocese into the Chester family.

Carol Thayer, Lay Director for Chester Cursillo



Chester Cursillo Thinks Afresh

I've just come back from a great weekend at Foxhill, where 26 Cursillistas from Chester (and Lichfield) dioceses worked hard at re-thinking our future direction.

It all started when a group of us went on a Cursillo Leaders Workshop, where we were encouraged to think more about the importance of the 4th. Day Community. We got excited about a vision of Cursillo in which the Weekend was not the 'be all and end all', but the beginning of a long-term commitment to deepening Christian discipleship, within the context of the 4th. Day Community.

This was particularly timely because we were aware that the Covid lockdowns had significantly weakened some parts of our 4th. Day Community. We had a weekend booked at Foxhill, but we knew that we might struggle to find both staff and participants. So, it seemed "good to the Holy Spirit and us" to use the already-booked weekend to strengthen and re-vitalise our 4th. Day Community



So, we planned a Weekend like no other. Yes, there would be talks and table discussions, worship and meditations, palanca, parties and talent shows, but no Gofers, no participants, no Festival of Light, no Wake-up.

The talks were about different aspects of Chester Cursillo life, with a renewed emphasis on the importance and work of the 4th. Day Community. We built on the idea of a "Servant Community": Cursillistas, involved in the 4th. Day, who were ready to serve in different teams in different ways. One team might support a Secretariat member (e.g. helping and shadowing the Weekend Co-ordinator). Another team might help the 4th. Day Officer in the task of nurturing the 4th. Day Community. Another team might develop and support Sponsors. The overall vision was that the Servant Community would be involved behind the scenes throughout a participant's journey - from before their Weekend, through their Weekend, and on into integration into the 4th. Day Community.



Well, we filled up lots of flipchart sheets with ideas, comments and reflections. Now the Secretariat has to weigh it all, and see where God is leading us. So, watch this space. I don't know what the outcome will be, but I'm sure that, just from what God did amongst us at the Weekend, the Servant Community has an identity and a vision which it didn't have before. And we are all the richer for that.

Tony Rablen, Spiritual Director

Here I Am Lord!

Would you like to help and support participants on their Cursillo weekend?

This is a very rewarding and joyful opportunity to assist in making the weekends a truly enriched spiritual journey for participants and a time to reflect on your own Cursillo weekend experience.

There are a number of varying roles, you will always work in pairs, one of which has staffed before on a weekend and has plenty of experience ensuring the weekend runs smoothly. Prior to a weekend there are usually 2 training days, where all of the weekend team meets together and looks at the full program and what is required.

The roles include Table Leaders / Assistant, General Gofors, Palanca Gofor, Music Gofor.....

Table Leaders / Assistants

The Table Leader and Assistant are there to help create the space for participants to be open and respond to God during the weekend, their role includes: facilitating discussions, encouraging all participants to feel free to join in with the discussions, to listen and allow time for discussions and to hold in prayer all of the participants on your table.



General Gofors

There are usually 2 General Gofors, one having experience of staffing on Cursillo weekends. This role is to look after the practical needs of the participants and to liaise with the weekend Leader and Spiritual Directors to ensure the smooth running of the weekend. A timetable of events is always available, and this will have been discussed at the 2 training days.



Palanca Gofors

Again, there are 2 Palanca Gofors, one having experience of Cursillo weekends. The main role is to organise and segregate the cards and gifts that arrive throughout the weekend. They also assist the General Gofors ensuring a timely and smooth running of the weekend.



Music Gofor

This role is responsible for the musical worship throughout the weekend, this includes liaising with staff and Spiritual Directors who are preparing and giving talks, ensuring that their hymn / worship song is available in words and music, ensuring that hymn books / song books are available for the varying services during the whole weekend and ensuring that forms of worship media i.e., CD's and player, Taizé music etc are available. A timetable is always available, which is discussed as part of the 2 training events.

If you feel you would like to know more about any of these roles and/or to be on a staff team for a weekend, please feel free to contact weekend-coordinator@chestercursillo.co.uk for more information.

Linda Lewis

Stockport 4th Day Community

Here in Stockport, our 4th. Day Community has been hit with a double whammy: the untimely death of Irene Hinds, and then the Covid pandemic. Ruth Arthur inherited Irene's mantle at a difficult time!

But we have had something of a revival: new life has sprung up. Ruth's persistence paid off, and we have now re-started regular meetings....with one or two new faces too. We are quite a big group, so we tend to split into 2 for Group Reunion...and then come back together for delicious refreshments.

Importantly, there is a feeling that we are moving forward; that we are doing something worthwhile, and that Chester Cursillo is on the move again, with the 4th Day as a vital ingredient in that journey of life-long discipleship.

Ultreya!!!

Morag Ranson adds...There were 6 of us at our meeting last week. We had lovely fellowship and felt excited about trying to re-establish our habit of meeting in person to encourage and grow our faith.'



4th Day Community

Chester Cursillo

The rest of your life

Thank you to Stockport for sharing their story with us. Such a blessing to know the community is thriving once more.

We plan to focus on a different 4th Day Community in subsequent newsletters



Summer Write!

Rita Stubbs

I, accidentally, came across a free, online writers course, lasting for two weeks, called Summer Writing Sanctuary. It consisted of various exercises, one as simple as when you hear the word summer, what comes to mind?

As I wrote words and sentences down I realised that I had the ability to write something. Towards the end of the course there was a particular exercise called Drifting; imagine that I was on a raft, floating towards an island. What do I see? How do I feel? How does this connect to something I have been noticing in my life?

My answer to the last question was, going back, wanting to keep hold of memory. I had to write for 10 minutes; a story, poem or memory, without editing. This is it:

Happy times, warmth of the love of people, hearing gentle lapping of waves, like a ripple, not a whoosh. Leaves rustling on the swaying trees, slight breeze, making harmonies of rhythm, peaceful, waves joining into the rhythm of life.

As I stand gazing around this place.
Heat of the sun warming my face.
Such a small island,
Reminds me of ME,
This is the place I want to be.

Don't want the chaotic person I am,
Small like the island
I want to be.
Where am I going?
What will I become?
As I stand here, warmed, by the afternoon sun.

So excited, but a little afraid,
What of the future?
As I stand here, feeling strange.
Yes , a new chapter, even a book
Will I take courage and turn over a page?

This is my journey,
Which I'm starting on,
Becoming Rita/ME



A follow on exercise was to write a list of opposite forces that exist in life, e.g. night and day, love and hate. I had to choose two words, that are calling to me and write about them, for 5 minutes.

Realise who the sad person is, how had it happened that I lost who I was, who I had become. Can I love that person who pushed people away, being guarded, private, angry at myself for changing so much. Angry at circumstances that change my thinking and way I acted towards people and life.

Only me can change self, from angry, getting rid and letting go, have no hold on me any more. Small steps, I know I will get there.

Next came the exercise, if a pair of opposites was theme for a book, what kind of book would it be?

Looking for the real me, who am I? What had I become? How to let go and love the person I am?

What would it be called?

Discovery: Becoming ME

Next I had to imagine holding the book and reading the blurb on the back cover.

Will she be able to rip it off, knowing how much pain will be involved, like having knives pushed in, no respite from the agony. Facing what has been buried, smothered deep underground, how can she cope as everything rises up, to the surface, like a volcano erupting. Just another layer, waiting to be revealed, dealt with, allowing her to grow. So many, when will it end? How will she know the last layer has been peeled away? Will she recognise herself or want the old ME back? Can she and will she move forward, loving and not angry.

Life is a journey which we all travel on.



An Advent Book(s) Review!

Joan Clare

All of these books were bought online from Eden.co.uk It was only supposed to be one but the other two looked intriguing...so I bought those as well!

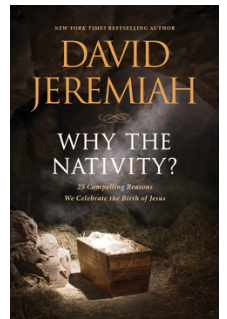


And the Glory of God shone around them Dr Brian Simmons with Jeremy Bouma: £5.99 on Amazon £5.44 from Eden.

This was my original choice because one of the authors is Dr Simmons who is responsible for the Passion Translation. I love the poetic language it uses, and this book doesn't disappoint containing readings from the Psalms and New Testament. The commentaries are easy to read but contain a thoughtful message. Each of the four weeks has a different heading; Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and each days reading ends with a prayer. The blurb on the back says that the book "follows the inspiring journey of the main characters of the Christmas Story". The readings end on Christmas Eve or Christmas day.

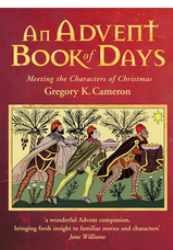
Why the Nativity? [25 compelling reasons we celebrate the birth of Jesus] by David Jeremiah: £2.65 from Eden.

Wanting an answer to this question I had to add it into the purchase. Each section starts with a question followed by a commentary and answer. It doesn't begin with a bible reading but has a list at the end for further reading. It also has questions for discussion, so can be used by groups or family. Once again, the language used is delightful, here's a quote from Ques. 2 ... " God made a universe of unbounded dimensions, measured out in stars and galaxies. Its size was matched by its vast complexity, in the intricate dance of atom and molecule"
Nuff said!!



An Advent Book of Days by Gregory K. Cameron [meeting the characters of Christmas: £8.58 from Eden

I was on a roll by now so added this one as it was part of the package. You know "all three for..." It was the most expensive, but I thought it worth the price. It's printed on that superior kaolin paper with a colourful icon at the beginning of each day's reading. It turns out the author is the Bishop of St Asaph who is also an artist and iconographer. It says on the inside title page, Bible, History, Legend, Faith. Not only are the usual suspects mentioned but more surprising ones like St Lucy, Herod, the Star and The Little Drummer Boy. In this last one the author talks about music and how "the talent of the human being to weave the sounds of the instrument and voice into a form of beauty... [is] evocative of our deeply spiritual impulses".



It's going to be a busy Advent on the reading front but I'm looking forward to beginning the journey to Christmas once again.

From 'And the glory...' "Commander of Angel-Armies, while things may seem hopeless for your people, remind us this Christmas season that your Branch-Man, the Son of your love and the One who dwells at your right hand, has come in full glory and power to reveal, rescue, revive, and restore!"

NOTICEBOARD

CHESTER DIOCESAN ULTREYA

The next Chester
Diocesan Ultreya will be
on:

3rd December 2022

10.00am - 1.00pm

St Paul's Macclesfield

with our Diocesan
Bishop Mark Tanner

The next Chester Cursillo
Weekend
takes place
27th - 30th April 2023
at
Wistaston Hall
Crewe

A final word...

I would like to say a huge thank you to all who have contributed to our newsletter. It has been a real pleasure to put this newsletter together. It brings good news and articles for reflection. Enjoy! Sue Lewis



Listen, I am standing at the door, knocking, if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you and you with me.

Rev 3:20

Let us remember this invitation as the season of Advent begins. I have been reading Gideon Heugh on Advent...he talks of how Advent can be 'swallowed up by Christmas'. Advent is a time for reflection, a slowing down of pace and anticipation.

God of darkness,
Spirit of winter,
Angels of the long night-
grant us the strength of our vulnerability,
help us to dwell in the places of waiting;
help us to listen to what the shadows are saying.

Gideon Heugh, from his book *Darkling: An Advent Journey*