



David Brown, a Lay Reader from St Matthew,s Edgeley and Cheadle Heath attended a Cursillo weekend in October 2009. During a recent Lent sermon he gave this is what he had to say about Cursillo.....

“This year I’ve found myself questioning what LENT really means to me.

Sure I know it’s a period of 40 days during which I feel obliged to give something up; chocolate or alcohol or some other luxury. A time when I ought to practise more self-discipline and set aside more time for prayer and study; a time when I should be letting God into my life more.

In essence it’s a time when we try to follow the example of Jesus in the desert by fasting and praying to God.

As Bishop Robert so eloquently put it last week deserts are not always full of sand; they tend to be places where there is usually an absence of things-wildernesses.

The Judean desert was largely devoid of life, a few creatures eking out an existence, a place with few things growing in it.

But wildernesses aren’t always physical places they can be places in our hearts and minds.

For me my wilderness was in my faith, for years, sadly, little grew there! I was content to plod through my desert; sure the odd spiritual bush grew there- even a desert’s not completely devoid of God’s presence.

The problem was that I wasn’t allowing Jesus to **gather me under his outstretched arms.**

Then God twice interrupted my life in the last 6 months. The first time was in late October last year.

Jesus pressed the pause button in my life and gently gathered Pam and I up in his arms and set us down at the start of a Cursillo weekend.

But don’t think we went easily, we were very apprehensive, we knew very little about the Cursillo movement-it almost felt like some form of secret organisation.

Like most things to do with faith we were afraid of the unknown, afraid that we might be changed too much by the experience. The fear that we wouldn’t be in control was

almost overwhelming. It was like going on a mystery tour where we had no idea where we were going or where we would end up, and we weren't even sure if we trusted the driver.

We simply couldn't understand why there was so much mystery about what would happen over the course of the weekend.

All we knew was that we trusted Irene who had invited us along, and we trusted Fr. Brian and Janet, who would be there; and we sure ought to trust Jesus who would definitely be there- but what if he wanted more from us than we were prepared to give?

And that's the question we all need to answer for ourselves, that's what often prevents us from running to shelter under His outstretched arms, "How often have I desired to gather YOU together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and YOU were not willing!"(Luke 13:34)

I remember Pam saying to me on the way there, "what if it's 'happy-clappy'? And we were both filled with dread, both being very conservative in our faith.

What we actually experienced over that weekend was a real closeness to God. We were taken out of our everyday lives, the daily hustle and bustle of busy family lives and instead we experienced the patient forgiving love of God.

The boundaries of our faith were challenged and stretched in a series of 15 talks, and it was a demanding weekend. But one in which I grew up immensely in my faith and understanding of God- and I felt that Jesus had indeed gathered me to him and I had let Him do so.

And yes we were happy and we did join in clapping along to songs! We felt comfortable with our faith!"