

THE CURSILLO CONNECTION

Autumn 2019

Cursillo News for the Diocese of St Albans



Welcome to your latest Newsletter!
This issue, which is being sent to the 92 Cursillistas who are part of the Cursillo family in our Diocese, includes testimony, story and lots to encourage.

Following on from the AGM on the 22nd June, we have some new members of the Secretariat. Here, to remind everyone who the Secretariat are, is the latest "Rogues Gallery"



LAY DIRECTOR - GEOFF NICHOLSON



SECRETARY - LIZ PULLER



TREASURER - JOHN EMMETT



BACC REPRESENTATIVE - ELAINE NICHOLSON

THE CURSILLO CONNECTION

Autumn 2019

Cursillo News for the Diocese of St Albans



4TH DAY REPRESENTATIVE - PAULINE HINGE



PALANCA REPRESENTATIVE - LAURIE LITTLE



PUBLICITY REPRESENTATIVE - MIKE ASHWOOD



SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVE - DAWN KENNEDY

Thanks to all who volunteered to join or continue to be on the Secretariat. It's been a tough time for Cursillo in St Alban's over the past couple of years, so thanks to all of you for your continued support. And thanks to all who have come to the end of their three-year term and stepped down.

If you want to get in touch with anyone on the secretariat visit the website stalbanscursillo.com or e-mail:

laydirector@stalbanscursillo.com

Our New Lay Director

As many of you will know, Mike Ashwood stepped down after his three-year term as Lay Director of St Alban's Cursillo at the AGM in June. Geoff Nicholson was dually invited by Bishop Alan to take over the role. Geoff has been a Cursillista for many years, originally doing his weekend on London #18 and has also been a Lay Rector (St Alban's #5) and served on the secretariat for as long as I can remember. His wife, Elaine has also agreed to serve on the Secretariat, taking over the role of BACC rep from Averil Lovatt.

THE CURSILLO CONNECTION

Autumn 2019

Cursillo News for the Diocese of St Albans



Note from the outgoing Lay Director:

As you now know Geoff Nicholson has taken over the role of Lay director of St Alban's Cursillo. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support and encouragement over the last three years whilst I was Lay Director. During that time, we had many ups and some downs, but it was a part of my life that I will remember for a long time, particularly as I was Lay Rector for St Alban's weekend #7 immediately before taking on the role of Lay Director. I remain passionate about Cursillo and how it can help in our Christian journey. Thanks again for your kind thoughts and for the gift that was given to me at the AGM.

Cursillo Weekend 24th - 27th October 2019.

As you are probably aware, we unfortunately had to cancel our planned Cursillo weekend again this year. At least on this occasion we did not incur the large costs that we had last year, but nevertheless this was a big blow to St Alban's Cursillo and the staff team in particular. Going forward from here, it is difficult to know how to encourage Pilgrims to join us on the weekends without more input from clergy

within the diocese. We need to engage more parishes than we currently reach out to and your Secretariat will be looking at that in the next few months. However, all was not lost with the weekend, as the three pilgrims that we had signed up have all found alternative weekends to go to in Chelmsford, London and Ely. Two of the pilgrims are also actively involved with fourth day groups already - so thanks to their sponsors for facilitating that. Two St Alban's Cursillistas will also be on the staff team of the London and Chelmsford weekends.

Love Stortford



During the week of the 10th - 16th June, Bishops Stortford Churches Together arranged for a "Love Stortford" week of activities. This was an attempt for the churches to take the Love of God to the community, to reach out to the town of Bishops Stortford. This was expressed in different projects during the week such as litter-picking, running a Thursday market

THE CURSILLO CONNECTION

Autumn 2019

Cursillo News for the Diocese of St Albans



stall giving away free tea and coffee, carrying out a big DIY project to refurbish Market Square and many more random acts. As part of our Apostolic Action, Cursillistas in Bishops Stortford wore their "Love Stortford" t-shirts and were fully supportive of this week and a number were involved in these activities:



Some Cursillistas helping with the litter picking - yes that's me the fat bloke on the right!



Another Cursillista making coffee for the litter pickers!

Spiritual Director

Following on from his recovery from lymphoma, our Spiritual Director, Rev Dan McCarthy decided that he wanted to reassess his ministry and stepped down from the role.



THE CURSILLO CONNECTION

Autumn 2019

Cursillo News for the Diocese of St Albans



We wish Dan and his family all the best in the years ahead. All of us who met Dan whilst he was involved with Cursillo found him truly inspirational and are sorry to see him go but are sure that wherever God leads him next it will undoubtedly be a success.

HOT OFF THE PRESS We have a new Spiritual Director! The Rev. Sam Frampton has accepted the role and Bishop Alan has confirmed his appointment. More information to follow in the next newsletter!

Here follows an article that was sent to me by one of our Cursillistas, written by someone close to them.

Cursillo - The Indirect Impact

I'm sure many people have shared how their lives have been transformed by attending Cursillo. However, I would like to

share with you how Cursillo has transformed my life indirectly through my father's attendance of the three-day event. In the early 1980s, I was a pre-teen enmeshed in usual school and peer challenges. Perhaps just as challenging, my family was being torn apart from the inside out. My brother was actively using illegal substances and was constantly in trouble with the law. My mother and father, who were well educated, hard working. God fearing people, prayed as hard as they could for God's guidance at their church. However, often they felt lost and helpless. My father was also handling significant stress from work and was made to feel as if he was worthless. This terrible feeling, which I think many of us can relate to, consumed him to the point where his own dependence on alcohol was consuming his life. At one point, he started questioning his existence. God's answer, as usual, comes in mysterious ways. My father was praying for an answer regarding my brother's problem. My father

THE CURSILLO CONNECTION

Autumn 2019

Cursillo News for the Diocese of St Albans



got an answer - just not the one that he expected. He was approached by a member of the clergy from St. Pauls Episcopal Church in Darien, Connecticut. He was told about Cursillo. My father at first dismissed the idea. He outwardly told my mother, in front of me, that he couldn't afford time away for an extended weekend and that work would have a big problem with him taking off a Friday. He came up with every excuse under the sun. It seemed to be a no go. But somehow the thought of this event kept cropping up in his heart and mind and after a week he decided to commit. Before he left, he was still quite sceptical. I remember him reluctantly saying goodbye to my mother and me. I didn't see him until the family reunification event on Sunday. What I witnessed was nothing short of a miracle. Somehow, my father was transformed from a miserable person to someone who was smiling and had hope for the first time in many years. The

fighting with all family members stopped; the drinking heavily subsided; and he was more at peace with himself. This is because he was at peace with his maker. Suddenly, he understood his significance because he felt loved by God. The positive effect that Cursillo had on my father continued to benefit me and my entire family for years to come. It is the reason why my father was able to have peace despite all the poor physical health he suffered and also the continued struggles with my brother that followed. It is the reason why my parents remained together in matrimony up until my father's passing. It is why my father was able to love my brother despite the disease. It is why I know in my heart that Cursillo is so important to so many - well beyond just the attendees. I've witnessed first hand how my father was saved.

It still continues to have a positive impact on my life today. As a mental health practitioner, it is my ethical responsibility to

THE CURSILLO CONNECTION

Autumn 2019

Cursillo News for the Diocese of St Albans



address and be open to explore any strengths that the client may have, such as family, friends, community support, and last but not least faith. Though I don't proselytise, I will openly discuss, when appropriate, how faith can have a lasting impact on providing strength to individuals who struggle with various challenges. It was, after all, this first-hand witnessing that has helped to guide my life into the field of helping others and to try to determine what God wants me to do to serve Him. I saw how God, through Cursillo, worked in my father's life and ultimately through my family. This has inspired me to work with families.

Thanks to Craig for providing this thought-provoking article. Not many of you know him, but it gives an example of how Cursillo can work outside our 4th day groups and influence others around us amongst family, friends, work colleagues - everyone we may come into contact with.

Once again, I am including those questions that we all should be addressing as individuals and in Group Reunions. Have you considered these questions and what did you think?

1. How can we raise the profile of Cursillo in the Diocese of St Alban's. We are a relatively young Cursillo and our Cursillistas are mainly concentrated in four "hotspots" within the diocese. How do we reach out to the (many) parishes that haven't come across Cursillo? How could we best encourage others to use the Cursillo method in this Diocese?
2. We are called to be a Servant Community - that is what Apostolic Action is about, not just as individuals but as a group within our churches. How can we best communicate God's Grace to people through our group reunions? Is there a particular act of service that our 4th Day Groups could take on? Where is there a need in our church and/or community?
3. What is the purpose of Cursillo in St. Albans diocese in your view?

THE CURSILLO CONNECTION

Autumn 2019

Cursillo News for the Diocese of St Albans



These are critical questions and we want to hear your answers to them. Maybe there are things that you are already doing that reflect the Cursillo method, or you may have ideas about how the wisdom of Cursillo might be applied in your situation. PLEASE may we have your views? How about asking someone in your 4th Day Group to draft a brief answer and send it into Geoff!!??

asked. Send me anything at any time by snail mail or, preferably by email on mikes.ashwood@gmail.com



Editor's Message

This is my first go at producing the newsletter and I hope you find it interesting and helpful. PLEASE remember that this is your Newsletter and I am dependent on you to send me stories, experiences, anecdotes, insights, discoveries, pictures etc - anything to do with your Cursillo experience. Please do not wait to be