



CURSILLO®

# The Fourth Bridge

November 2019



EPISCOPAL CURSILLO® IN SCOTLAND Reg. US Pat. Office Affiliated to B.A.C.C.



## **Cursillo Office Bearers**

### ***Secretariat***

Lay Director: Sally Mair

Spiritual Director: Rev Canon Duncan McCosh

Secretary:

Treasurer & Gift Aid: David Dalglish 01705 32293

Convenors:

Communications:

Fourth Day: Duncan Cowie 01467 623576

BACC Rep: Caroline Waddon

### ***Other Office Bearers***

Registrar: Karen Ellis

Resources: vacant

4th Bridge Editor: Duncan McCosh

Palanca Secretary: Wendy Wilkie

Music Closing: David McGavin 01968 675614

### ***Utreya Reps***

Aberdeen & Orkney: Duncan Cowie 01467 623576

Argyll & the Isles: vacant

Borders: Ruth McGrath 01573 228346

Brechin: Janet Spence 01241 859580

Edin & Lothians: Mike Coats

Glasgow & Galloway: Fran Walker or Morag O'Neill

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that the clocks have already gone back and that we are rapidly approaching Winter in all its splendour. I'm not going to mention THAT word, but as Advent approaches our anticipation as Christians grows and we prepare ourselves in prayer and study for the birth of our Lord. Meanwhile, all around us, the world prepares for the excitements and festivities to come, or indeed, have already begun! I suppose we should be happy that the whole world wants to extend the celebrations of the birth of our saviour, if that is what they are doing...

A few weeks ago, I had the joy of serving on team for Cursillo 67 so I'm delighted to be able to welcome 10 new Scottish Cursillistas to our community. It was a blessing to be on team and a joy to experience once again, the emergence and feeling of Christian Community that a Cursillo Weekend produces. The group of strangers who arrived on the Friday evening indeed realised quite quickly that they were in fact no longer strangers but friends who had not previously met.

What we, the existing Cursillo community knew, but the participants did not of course, was that theirs was the second trial of a shortened weekend. I will be reporting to the BACC meeting in York next week on this our second such weekend. The feeling amongst the teams of this and the previous weekend is that it is a viable alternative to the traditional Thursday to Sunday weekend, it also makes attendance easier for those who are unable to be away from home and or work for a longer period. The timetable had to be amended in several ways including the shortening of the length of rollos but this did not dilute the message rather made it clearer and more focussed. There are some features which we may well use in a longer weekend. Free time of course was in even shorter supply, and some discussion was time limited, but in general things were very positive.

Stephen Bowring, who served as one of the SAs on the Weekend and is the UK National Spiritual Director for BAC was extremely complimentary of the amount of work and preparation which had gone into the weekend. He felt the organisation of the weekend and the quality of the rollos was extremely high and that the team should be complimented.

There may have been lots of feet paddling furiously to keep things running smoothly, but the weekend itself flowed very well and we owe a debt of gratitude to Fran Walker and her team for all that they did both up front and in the background. The feedback from participants has been good from both weekends. A particular delight was that on Weekend 67, we had 3 participants from Weekend 66 serving on team, a tribute to their commitment and desire to share what they had been given with others. In addition another participant from Weekend 66 has moved straight into a serving role on Secretariat - Caroline Wadden of North Berwick is our BACC rep.

Plans for our next weekend are already underway and there will be more news of that in our next Fourth Bridge, or before, so watch this space. Please do pray whether it is time for you to serve on team and be praying about and talking to, people who you think would not only benefit from the Weekend, but be able to use Cursillo in their lives and build the Kingdom further. Bring them to Ultreyas, involve them in your reunion groups, at least four of our ten participants on the last weekend were active in the Fourth day before they came to the weekend. It is important to remember too that what you experienced on your weekend, which may be some time ago, is different in many ways to what people experience in 2019. We are all different and although the Cursillo method is the same its impact and application is different for each one of us.

🎵 “ We are many textures, we are many colours each one different to the other one, but we are all playing in harmony in one great symphony, weave , weave, weave us together, weave us together, together in love. 🎵

Ultreya.

I wish you a wonderful season of anticipation and a very, very happy Christmas

Sally



## Dates for next year.

**Secretariat and Servant Community:** Meeting at 10:30am  
The Threshold Centre, Perth. Bring and share lunch  
Saturday 21 March  
Saturday 8 August  
Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November

**Sunday Revisited:** Saturday 25 April at The Threshold Centre, Perth. 10:30 for 11am. Lunch provided. Further details to follow.

**Provincial Ultreya:** Saturday 6 June 2020, venue to be confirmed (Glasgow and Galloway Diocese). Further details to follow.

## Reflections on Cursillo # 67

I remember the meditations on the Friday evening and the peaceful night's sleep.

I remember the stillness in the room after each thought provoking Rollo talk. I observed the team coming and going to pray in the chapel and found this visual rhythm of prayer deeply moving, comforting and strengthening.

I remember my rainbow bag full of Palanca being brought into the room and smile to myself and just keep smiling and glowing and smiling and glowing like a child experiencing Christmas for the first time. I am filled with wonder as to how it all came to be.

I thoroughly enjoyed the glass or two of red wine, the meal, the music, the laughter and the fellowship. The attention to detail in the bunting, the placemats and the butterflies scattered on the table and as I glanced over the room at everyone seated together I was reminded of a special hymn, 'for everyone born a place at the table'. Mutual respect and Love for one another was glowing all around. It was a very special supper. Although I already had a loving relationship with God I had always been a bit like Martha and spent most of my energy serving Him, somewhere in the weekend, perhaps it was in the midst of the evening Eucharist everything seemed to shift and His love for me seemed overwhelming.

I remember feeling beautifully bewildered by the whole evening, deeply happy and so surrounded by love on the Saturday night. So rooted in my being.

I will never ever forget the surprise of seeing Alison, my sponsor at the wakeup call on the Sunday morning. Never did I ever imagine how anyone could do that for me, to get up so early to travel to Perth and be there to be part of the dawn chorus. It was just amazing and it makes me laugh with happiness and I now understand as to why the Cursillo weekend is kept as such a wonderful surprise!

With my many thanks for everyone who made it possible.

Long may it continue.

Margaret McMeekin

## Ultreya Dates

Edinburgh:

Wednesday 20th November 7.30pm, St Marks Portobello

Tuesday 17th December 7.30pm The Upper Hall St Paul's and St Georges, York Place

Saturday 11th January, Epiphany Party with bring and share lunch  
12noon for 12.30, Inverard, Arboretum Road

If any body has a party piece they would like to present at the Epiphany party please do let us know. Mike, Sally, Marilyn and David

*Aberdeen:*

*15th January, 7.00 pm coffee and fellowship 7.30 pm start and finishing 9.00 pm with coffee and fellowship for anyone that wants to stay on after the Ultreya. 17 Cuninghill avenue. Inverurie. AB51 3 TZ*

Moray:

Drop-in Reunion planned for November 21<sup>st</sup> Palace Hotel, Ness Walk, at 11am.

*For details of other meetings please contact the Ultreya Rep*

### A recent talk at a 'Cursillo' Church

I can't quite believe this day has come. It feels like an eternity ago that I decided to postpone my teaching career and travel the world, starting with Switzerland. Four weeks ago, I was asked if I would like to be today's speaker as it is my last day here at St Peter's, for four months at least. My first thought about speaking today when I received that email was, "what a great way to close this chapter in my life and open the next. Sharing my journey with some of my closest friends and family, and even some of my employers."

The idea of me standing in front of you all to deliver this a few years ago would have been panic attack inducing for me. I make no secret of my battles with depression and anxiety. It is natural for an individual to experience anxiety before exams, competitions and I'm sure many of you encountered it on your wedding day or at the birth of your children. There are those, however, that everyday tasks induce anxiety. Simple things, such as going to work, shopping or even just leaving the house can seem daunting. Medication can only go so far when it comes to tackling this, the best thing to do is repeatedly experience the situations that scare you.

When I arrived here at St Peter's seven years ago, anxiety already had a grip on my life. I was in my final year of high school and taking part in numerous afterschool activities and lessons. I had filled my time with studying and specific groups but I'm sure many of you can remember me hating people standing too close and hugging was completely out of the question. I never sang properly, out of fear someone would hear me and practically hid behind my mum so that I didn't have to speak to anyone. Oh how times have changed!

Not long after I began regularly attending services I was asked if I would like to serve at the altar. This meant people would have to see me and watch what I was doing throughout the service. A scary thought, but I accepted because after all I wouldn't be the only one up there. I was terrified that I would make a mistake and

end up ruining the service for months, despite John's (head server) insistence that I wouldn't. He seemed to have more confidence in my abilities than I did and I have to thank him for continually encouraging me to carry on. By serving, though, it also meant I had to be present more consistently at services and interact more with people.

I then started to attend Cursillo weekends where I allowed myself to open up a little more to people and stop seeing them all as the enemy. I let people hug me and not only spoke with individuals that I had never met before but lived with these people eating, relaxing and praying together. In the grand scheme of things this may appear to be a small thing but I know many of you were shocked when I came back and embraced you during the Peace.

I decided to take my journey with Cursillo a step further just a year later when I became a member of team in the following weekend which involved delivering a fifteen minute talk. This talk was only to around twelve people but the night before my first one I was so scared that I had a panic attack and had to be talked down by other members of the team, but I did it. Nothing went wrong and the participants appeared to enjoy it. I have since been on team a second time with a different schedule in a different place, delivered a second talk, minus the panic attack beforehand, and I have even gone on to speak at the Borders monthly meetings.

News of my teaching degree had got around the congregation here by this time as well and I was encouraged to help out the Messy Church. Teaching a group of around four children at a time about an activity and helping them with it. Not something I had actually done before with the ages of the children who were attending. I was unsure if teaching was something that I would be good at or indeed that I enjoyed being a part of, but Messy Church gave me the opportunity to experience this and discover my joy for teaching. Every month I was worried that the children wouldn't like the activity I was doing or wouldn't like me, but I was

encouraged by the reactions of the younger members of our church.

Listening to all of this you may think, but you could do this with any group. Attend meetings and help out with functions. There is nothing specifically important about our faith which helps to combat anxiety. That would be where you are wrong.

Throughout my talk today I have mentioned many important parts about being a member of the congregation. Being involved in events, attending a weekly service and helping to educate the new generation of Christians. But the most crucial part of our faith I have yet to mention. Can anyone guess?

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

I was always drawn to God, even when I had very little knowledge about faith and religion. I read my Bible and wanted to attend church. It has become somewhere safe for me. Somewhere that anxiety is very rarely experienced.

I hadn't noticed my routine for dealing with extreme anxiety until a month ago. My sister called to let us know that she had gone into labour and my parents left immediately to be with her. I felt there was very little that I could do but sit and wait, which I hated doing. Instinctively I picked up my Bible and began to read. Instantly I felt calmer. Every time I was concerned about my sister I picked up my Bible and read for a while. Although certain passages, such as those that I chose to be read today are particularly reassuring as we speak about our Father always being there with us and that he will take away our anxieties, any reading can be helpful. It stands to say that our God is here, that they care for our wellbeing and that there is always a reason for something to happen.

There is a reason why in times of disaster and difficulty the masses turn to churches, it is because the words of the Lord are soothing. They let us know that someone can hear how we feel and that we are not alone in our pain.

Whenever I am dealing with my anxiety now, I know that I can speak with God, explain my fears and doubts before acknowledging that I am not alone in this moment. They are always standing beside me, supporting me.

As I step out this week to begin a new chapter in my life I have no doubt that I will feel anxiety. I am travelling to a different country where I will have to learn not only a new language, but routine, customs and culture, but I am also in no doubt that I am not stepping out alone. I have the support of my family, blood and church, friends and employers, but most importantly I have the support of God.

I want to take these last few minutes I have left to thank you all. Thank you for welcoming both myself and my mum into this family and never having an ounce of judgement. Thank you for your prayers when times were difficult and your patience when we bombarded you with our incessant photos of my nieces and nephew. Thank you for your confidence in me when I had very little confidence in myself and your words of wisdom when I needed to hear them. Thank you for simply listening when I needed someone to talk to. I will be eternally grateful for each and every one of you who come into my life when God decided I needed you. Thank you.

*Elspeth Smale*

## **COURAGE**

Recently I attended a concert in Galashiels. It was part of Stuart Townend's Courage Tour. Stuart writes and performs Christian songs some of which you may already know from hearing them on Songs of Praise. Check the website - [stewarttownend.co.uk](http://stewarttownend.co.uk) We were encouraged to join in the ones we knew and Stuart taught us a couple of the ones on his new album and some we just listened to.

It was uplifting and inspiring especially when Stuart told us how he thought he was dealing with the awful news that his brother Phil was terminally ill. Stuart's default position was to find as many practical things that could be done for Phil and his family to "fix" the situation. He was astonished to find that his brother was not in desperate turmoil but was living on a different plane "in the moment" and getting as much joy out of each day as possible. Stuart then realised that he was not really dealing with things as they were but was hiding his pain in the prognosis by being busy "helping".

Two songs came out of this. The first was "Keep you here" – the immediate reaction to the thought of losing Phil. The second was "Courage"

Another humbling act of courage was shown by Stuart's daughter Emma who told us about living with mental health problems. This is what she said

"As we wrote this song, friendship became a very prominent theme, and walking the journey of life with the hurt and broken, right in the midst of their suffering – NOT when it's over and 'tidy and done' – but right in the messy, uncomfortable heart of suffering that is very present and real in our Churches, our communities, and our personal friendships.

We talked earlier in the concert about grief with my uncle Phil and the song 'Keep You Here', and I want that to lead us into a wider conversation about mental health. Because: there are Christians with Mental Health problems.

There are people with depression, with schizophrenia, with anorexia, with PTSD... to name literally just a few.

And I'm one of those people too!

So this song is an encouragement to walk beside one another, acknowledging that we are all broken in some form. And the way we

are called to support and love one another is a reflection of the way God loves and supports us.

So to answer the question of “What does COURAGE really mean to me?”

COURAGE is accepting that I am broken; that I am not ‘fixed’; but that I am still ‘enough’ to stand here.

It takes:

COURAGE to tell my family and friends that on a bad day I am not doing okay.

COURAGE to accept their support and love.

COURAGE to cry when I want to look strong.

COURAGE to strip away my anger and confront the pain beneath.

COURAGE to face my past.

COURAGE to look at my future.

COURAGE sometimes just to wake up; get up.

COURAGE to live each day.

COURAGE to hit the bottom and get back up again.

COURAGE to forgive myself and acknowledge that I am forgiven.

COURAGE to dare to believe in a God who loves me unconditionally.

COURAGE to say I am Emma with Mental Health problems, not Mental Health problems called Emma.

COURAGE is coming exactly as I am.

COURAGE is listening to the quiet voice in the mayhem that says: ‘I am here for you’.

Then she sang the song she wrote with her father called “I am here for you”

Would that we all had the courage to be ourselves as God sees us and to let the world see us that way too, and to help and support each other in whatever way is needed.

Sheena (Borders Cursillista)

## **The 1 Corinthians 13 of Christmas**

If I decorate my house with beautiful bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny baubles, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of mince pies, roasting a perfect turkey, and lay a magnificent table, but have no love for my guests, I am just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home, and give all that I have to charity, but do not have compassion in my heart for those in need, I am just another social service; it profits me nothing.

If I decorate the tree with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes and attend a myriad of holiday parties but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to help one's wife with boring housework. Love puts the Christmas present shopping on hold in order to run the elderly neighbour to the doctor. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love doesn't envy another's home that has more expensive presents, or even coordinated Christmas china and table linen. Love doesn't yell at the children to get out of the way; love is glad that they are there to be in the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, even irritating relatives. It believes all things, and encourages teenagers to aim high for their future. It hopes all things, endures all things, even a spouse who is depressed about their job prospects. Love never fails other people. Computer games will crash, even cashmere jumpers will wear out, and golf clubs will get lost. But the gift of love will endure forever. Happy Christmas!

## **Shepherds to Shepherd**

(Lk2:8-20, Jn10:11)

You will find the baby,  
Said the angel,  
You will find the baby  
In Bethlehem,  
The baby of glory and peace,  
The baby of good news and joy.

So the shepherds began  
Their journey of trust  
In the word of the Lord.

Hurrying,  
Finding,  
Telling,  
Glorifying,  
Praising,

It was just as the angel had said.

And they went back to watch over their flocks,  
Having met one of their own.

*By Daphne Kitching*

## **A Christmas Creed**

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the One whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe in the One for whom the crowded inn could find no room; and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the One whom the rulers of the earth ignored, and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the One who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible.

I believe in the One whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God; the need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself.

I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world.

*Author unknown*