

What Every Priest Should Know About Cursillo:

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What is Cursillo?

Cursillo is a movement of the Holy Spirit within the Church. It has helped raise up and activate leaders for the Church at every level of ministry. The three-day weekend is a short course in Christian living. Cursillo is a National program that functions under the Presiding Bishop of the Church, and is overseen locally by our Diocesan Bishop and a local Secretariat. When Cursillo is healthy in a Diocese it always involves the full ministry of the Church, Bishops, Priests, Deacons and Laity.

The origins of Cursillo are from the Roman Catholic Church in Spain. It was conceived as a method of reenergizing the participation of men in the Church. It is now co-ed in most dioceses. It experienced rapid growth in the Church from the 70s through the 80s, and in many dioceses continues to be a source of unity and evangelism for the Church.

The Theology of Cursillo

The theological underpinnings of the Cursillo movement are rooted in classic western spirituality of the Church. It teaches that we all must live our life rooted in Jesus. One maintains the active and growing connection and their continued conversion to Christ by living a balanced life of Piety, Study and Action. This classic balance is also the theological hallmark of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, and the Daughters of the King, and is historically Benedictine.

- Our acts of **Piety** begins with active and regular worship in our local congregation, then flows toward a regular and personal life of prayer and devotion.
- Our **Study** is a quest to more fully know the mind of Christ. We must study the Scriptures and strive to read the historic and contemporary theological works of the Church. As a Priest your direction and help in study is vital and we count upon you for direction.
- Our **Action** is that we are to be like the apostles and be personally active in the Ministry of the Church. We are to be as Mary and bear the presences of Christ into our homes, our jobs, and our neighborhoods. As active Christians we are that leaven which transforms the world for Christ.

The Maintenance of our Ministry

The only unique aspect of Cursillo is that it encourages us to gather weekly in small groups for the expressed purpose of fellowship to help hold each other accountable in our Christian life and witness. This is called Group Reunion. Grouping is about keeping our connections to Christ and to the Church active, alive, and fruitful.

Cursillo also has regional monthly meetings called Ultreya (A shout of encouragement meaning onward and upward). These short gatherings gives everyone a monthly chance to take a turn at giving a lay witness talk, which is a short 5 to 10 minute sharing about what you have been doing for Jesus. It is great practice in a safe location to speak aloud about our life and witness for Christ. It helps everyone see all that we do for Christ, be it big or small, as significant. Ultreya is also a time of small group sharing, and music. The Clergy job at Ultreya is to make a theological-biblical connection of the Witness talk to the Gospel.

As a Priest of the Church I have found that my Group Reunion is an important regular source of love and support throughout my ministry. Clergy need true support and a deepen connection to our faith community. Faithful friends you can talk to is a true blessing.

The Roll of Clergy in Cursillo

Cursillo always involves the full participation of the all the orders in the Church. Without the Bishop's support and approval, there is no Cursillo in a Diocese. Without the support of the local parish priest, your members cannot make a weekend. Without active lay ministry, the mission of Cursillo fails. Christ is counting upon us to complete his work in the world.

As a Parish Priest you play a specific role in the movement; as Teachers of the historic Faith, as Spiritual Guides, as Confessors, and to celebrate the word and sacraments. I love it when I work a weekend and get to witness the light of Christ shine in new ways in the life of a person. The Holy Spirit moves people right before your eyes.

The Effects of Cursillo on a Local Parish

Priests who are active in their support of the Cursillo movement will be blessed with more and more active lay leaders; leaders who are striving to be Christ centered and leaders who are attempting to bring others to Christ and into the life of the Church. Cursillo is a movement of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. When the Spirit moves, people are moved into greater works for Jesus' sake, and to greater support and creativity in the mission of the local congregation.

What Are You Afraid Of?

Have you heard of or witnessed issues surrounding Cursillo? Do those issues match the present reality of Churches in our Diocese? Explore the contemporary reality of Cursillo in your Diocese, and do not rely upon hearsay. Talk to your Bishop about Cursillo. Talk to the active Clergy in your Diocese who are active in Cursillo. As the times have changed so has Cursillo. The mission of Cursillo has not changed for it is to inspire and create leaders for the Church.

Many of our Clergy think that Cursillo is only a renewal weekend.

No. Cursillo's prime teaching method is the three-day weekend, with its 5 meditation, 15 talks and daily Mass. Cursillo is more than a renewal weekend, it is a spiritual method that moves and maintains our members to stay connected to Christ and to the Church. Cursillo help Episcopalians to talk about their faith and to share that story with others.

Many of our Laity believe that Clergy fear strong lay leadership.

Yes, this is true; some of our members think that some clergy are focused more upon themselves and not upon activating the full ministry of everyone in the Church. I have found consistently that my best parish evangelists are active in Cursillo. Their focus is upon Jesus, and how to bring their friends to Jesus and to Church. I have found that many of the most active Vestry members and program leaders have made a Cursillo Weekend. Cursillo is movement of the Holy Spirit for the Church, and it helps inspire and builds up the ministry of the whole Church.

How to Get Involved

Come and see firsthand so you will have a better understanding what Cursillo is all about. Attend a Three-Day Weekend, attend Ultreya; have lunch with a fellow cleric and talk about the fire and excitement that Cursillo can foster in a congregation. Read the Cursillo Library which is a collection of booklets about Cursillo. Read your diocesan Weekend Manual which will give you a detailed accounting of everything that is done on a weekend. Your Knowledge, skills and spirit are needed to move Cursillo forward.