

Information on Cursillo

The ministry section of the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer concludes with the question “What is the duty of all Christians?” This is an appropriate start to an explanation of the Cursillo Movement, which helps us with that duty.

What is the duty of all Christians?

The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ, to come together week by week for corporate worship, and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God.

What is Cursillo? It is a method to help us carry out our Christian duty.

What is the essence of that method?

To make it possible to live what is fundamental for being a Christian in order to become more effective in apostolic action.

What is apostolic action? The way we bring Christ to others and others closer to Christ to spread the kingdom of God.

What is the Goal of Cursillo? The goal of Cursillo is the goal of the Church: to restore all people to unity with God and unity with each other through Christ.

What is the relationship of Cursillo to the Church? Cursillo is a movement within the church, under the direction of the Diocesan Bishop, which utilizes a specific strategy to achieve its goal.

What is that strategy? The strategy consists of the Pre-Cursillo, the Three-Day Weekend and the Fourth Day.

What is the Pre-Cursillo? It is the identification of those Episcopalians who are living an active Christian life and are living a witness to their love for Christ. Those identified are informed about and invited to make a Cursillo Three-day weekend.

What is the Three-Day Weekend?

It is a time to focus on what is fundamental for being a Christian and to learn the Cursillo method. It is a springboard to living the Fourth Day.

What is the Fourth Day? The fourth day is the centerpiece of the Cursillo movement. It represents a lifetime of living out one’s Baptismal Covenant. This long range practice is reinforced through fourth day activities: The Group Reunion, the Ultreya and Spiritual Direction.

What is the Group Reunion?

The Group Reunion is the heart of Cursillo. It is a small group of friends who meet weekly and who hold each other accountable for their spiritual journey. They report on their piety, their study, and their apostolic action. A bonding develops that often becomes a strong spiritual support group for life.

What is the Ultreya? The Ultreya is a “reunion of reunions”. It is usually held monthly and is an opportunity to build community by sharing the experience of living with Jesus Christ. A witness talk is given to show how environments are being changed by this person.

“Environments” refer to the people and institutions we come in contact with — family, work, leisure, social, and church.

What is Spiritual Direction? It is the process of leading and guiding a person in his or her spiritual life. It provides help in deepening a person’s union with Christ. It is a human relationship in which two persons come together in the Holy Spirit to know the truth and to do it. Either skilled lay persons or clergy can provide spiritual direction.

Commonly asked questions about Cursillo

What happens on the three-day weekend? The three-day weekend brings together a group of Episcopalians to share the richness of worship and to broaden each one’s appreciation for the Church. Lay people conduct the weekend with two or three members of the clergy functioning as spiritual advisors. In the course of the weekend, a series of 15 talks are given with emphasis on the doctrine of Grace, the Sacraments, and the Cursillo Foundations: Piety, Study, and Action. Table groups discuss and respond to the talks. The Eucharist is celebrated daily, and the Daily Offices are used. Some time is provided for prayer, confession, and spiritual direction. There is also fellowship, singing, good food, time for privacy, meditation and prayer.

Where did it come from?

Cursillo came from the Spanish Roman Catholic Church. It was introduced into the Episcopal Church in the 1970's by teams from the Roman Catholic Church and has continued to grow. Several Spanish words, such as the word "Cursillo", have been retained because of this Spanish history.

Why is the weekend denominational?

The weekend is not intended to proselytize. It is meant to equip Episcopalians to be effective witnesses for Christ in their everyday environments. It helps Episcopalians understand the resources of their own tradition in order to become more effective apostles. Non-Episcopalians attending a weekend may be misled into thinking that the spiritual power that comes from the weekend comes from the Episcopal structure of the weekend rather than realizing it comes from the Spirit of God. For these reasons we have agreed with the Roman Catholic Church to conduct Episcopal Cursillo weekends for Episcopalians by Episcopalians.

Why is the Fourth Day non-

denominational? Christians can and should work together to transform environments. Those who have attended Cursillo or other Fourth Day movements in their own denomination and those who have not even come close to Cursillo have always been able to work together in the Fourth Day - where the action is and where it really counts - for the sake of Christ.

Ecumenism is a good thing and should be encouraged in the Fourth Day.

Is it a renewal movement or an evangelism movement? The three day weekend is a time of renewal, refreshment and recommitment to living for Christ. The Fourth Day employs Group Reunion, Ultreya and Spiritual Direction to prepare for and accomplish evangelistic ministry.

Are there Cursillo secrets?

There are not secrets about Cursillo or its goal and purpose. Some of the joyful activities on the three day weekend are experienced as surprises.

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