

## Spiritual Director's Report 2017

It is with something of a heavy heart that I start to write this report as it signifies the end of a working relationship that has helped to guide Cursillo from the 3 former Dioceses of Ripon & Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield into its present form as Leeds Anglican Cursillo. As Lynette steps down as Lay Director, I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks for her support and tireless work throughout and beyond the transition, the success of which I doubt we would have been able to report confidently had it not been for her wise guidance and vision. I shall certainly miss her dedicated and relentless work in pulling together the teams for Weekends, along with her prayerful support of me in my role. Platitudes are never appropriate expressions of what we really would like to say but there is really no other way to say that she will be a hard act to follow! I wish her well and offer my prayers for a well-earned rest as she takes a back seat (although it will be encouraging... and encouraged...if she feels like being a typical back seat driver!). Go well, Lynette and huge thanks for all you have given to Cursillo...and will, I hope, continue to give in other ways.

As Lynette steps down, we are fortunate to have the experienced safe hands of John Speller taking up the reins as our next Lay Director and I send him my good wishes; I will, of course, pray for him as he settles into the role. I look forward to working once again with John as we continue to lead Leeds

Cursillo onto greater prominence in the Diocese, with a more integrated role in Diocesan mission and discipleship pathways. This will include discussions at senior staff level and also further presentations to clergy chapter meetings, to encourage clergy to understand the significance of Cursillo within the parish system.

The past year has been a time of settling into the new identity of a large Diocesan Cursillo, with all the joys and, inevitably, difficulties that has produced. Our Weekends at Wydale Hall have continued to be well-received by both pilgrims and teams alike. Despite initial reservations about travelling greater distances, those who experience Wydale's surroundings and hospitality all agree that it really is the ideal place to gather. I appreciate that those travelling only on the Sunday for the Closing Service will find it makes for a long day but your presence there to support the new Cursillistas is hugely appreciated, as evidenced by their beaming smiles as they enter the Chapel and the excited buzz in the dining room at the tea afterwards!

Since my last annual report, the Episcopal Area Chaplains and I have been looking at ways to encourage local groups to nominate members for their servant communities. who will work to plan ultreyas, etc. This is particularly vital in the Wakefield EA as some momentum seems to have been lost through the period of transition. This is ongoing but I see it not

as discouraging but instead, the encouraging signs of an (almost) new mission field in which there is great work to be done, with the prospect for great growth as a result. If I could please take this chance to call on all cursillistas, wherever you are in the Diocese, to prayerfully consider how you can serve Cursillo (and therefore the Church) in a more productive way. If we all pull together and work with the Holy Spirit, I am confident that great things can be achieved, with the added bonus of enabling the senior staff in the Diocese to see just how amazing the Cursillo method is for enabling growth and discipleship. To misquote a certain oft-used phrase, it's not just about 'talking the talk', we must 'walk the walk' too!

As with any living organism, there, naturally, must be change, which, if used correctly, will bring about growth. I reported last year that the Wakefield EA Chaplain role had become vacant and, for a while, Revd Canon Barbara Clarke took up the mantle and did a sterling job. However, with the retirement of Revd Anne Young as Huddersfield EA Chaplain in April, I invited Barbara to 'move sideways' as it were and represent the area she resides in. Barbara does so in the knowledge that Huddersfield, thanks to Anne's vision, energy and enthusiasm, is showing great signs of life and new growth, with a strong servant community to undergird activities there. Enormous thanks go to Anne for her unswerving dedication to regeneration there and I'm sure that you join me in wishing her well and praying for a long, happy and rewarding retirement.

That, of course, leaves Wakefield vacant again and I am currently in the process of appointing a successor for Barbara. I continue to cover the Leeds and, wider, Diocesan area, in the knowledge that Revd Marion Gaskell is an experienced and sagacious steward of the Bradford EA. She too, however, is due to retire this coming year and so my thoughts and prayers are focused on a successor for her role. Revd Wilf Gowing kindly accepted my invitation to be Ripon EA Chaplain for the past year but now retires to pursue other interests and callings. I offer my appreciation to him for employing his previous experience as a Diocesan Spiritual Director to guide Cursillo in the right direction and for being an astute and steadying influence in the northern part of our large Diocese. Our prayers, thanks and good wishes go with him as he steps out into a new horizon. I am delighted to be able to announce that the Revd Stewart Ridley (retired and living in Catterick) will be stepping into Wilf's shoes and look forward to seeing new growth, particularly in the Catterick area as a result.

As we look ahead, I will be calling on the EA Chaplains and Area reps to work together to facilitate some Days of Deeper Understanding. These have, sadly, been few in number whilst we concentrated on establishing a sense of normality after the transition and now that we have a better idea of how the land lies, I feel it is important to get back to reinforcing the teaching of Weekends and examining how we might better run the Weekends themselves and also servant communities. Please

keep a watchful eye on publicity for these and encourage other cursillistas to attend with you, if you can.

Finally, thanks from me to all of you who gossip about Cursillo so enthusiastically. I use that term 'gossip' deliberately, because our love of Cursillo and how it enables a closer journey with Christ must be something we feel as comfortable talking about as if we were chatting about the weather or the price of bread! Please, please, don't be secretive about what Cursillo is and does; shout it from the rooftops and let others be desperate to have what you have, always remembering to 'Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ.'

Blessings, in Christ,

Revd Mandy Rhodes