



**The British Anglican Cursillo®**

# **ULTREYA**

*Revised 2018*

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## Introduction

These booklets, which form the Resource Manual or Handbook for British Anglican Cursillo (BAC), are revised versions of the original documents gifted to BAC from the Episcopal Church of the USA in 1989. In the early to mid-2000s and again in 2013/4 They had been revised for basic differences between the American ways of doing things and for language alterations, but it became apparent that the booklets were not being read or used effectively by Diocesan Cursillo.

This major revision and rewording of the booklets was made by a group of experienced Cursillistas in 2017/8 and is intended for use by Diocesan Cursillo in order to explain and guide such groups in the practicalities and use of the Cursillo method. We believe that this reflects best practice.

In line with recent legal requirements there are also attached Guidelines and Policy Documents, particularly in regard to safeguarding, insurance and financial matters.

It is recommended that any future reviews of these booklets refer back to the original documents received from the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA), copies of which should be held by the BAC President.

*February 2018*

## Ultreya

Let us hold firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.

**Hebrews 10:23-25 .**

"Ultreya!" - a cry of encouragement! "Keep on going! Onward!" Pilgrims on the long road to the shrine of St. James of Compostela shouted this to each other -

"Ultreya!" We meet in our Ultreyas as pilgrims too, on the journey to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. There we challenge each other to penetrate, make an impact and change our environments and the world for Christ. Ultreya – it is no coincidence that it bears that name!

There are just about as many ideas concerning what an Ultreya is as there are people reading this. Most of us have only our own experience and inheritance to guide our understanding. This booklet will attempt to lay before you the original pattern for an Ultreya as the founders developed it with prayer and wisdom years ago, and as BAC has received it. The founders' writings and the content of the Cursillo Leaders' Workshop are the sources for what you will read here.

Ultreya is the least understood part of the Cursillo Movement. Most difficulties arise from an insufficiently high concept of the Cursillo Movement.

On a Cursillo Weekend, FOUR parts of the Christian Ideal

are presented:

**Living life in Grace.** Most people are aware of the need for this ideal and some are already doing this before their 3-Day Weekend.

**Spreading Life in Grace** by personal (one-to-one) contact. This explicit sharing of the faith is what is called in Cursillo *Apostolic Action*.

**Sharing life in Grace** within small groups (Group Reunion). This is a new experience, if not a new concept, for most people.

**Witnessing to life in Grace** in the Christian Community in order to transform individual's life situations or environments.

In addition to presenting in the talks this ideal of Christian life, the three-day weekend also provides a living model for its possibility. If the team has lived the talks the new Cursillistas will have experienced individual grace-filled lives, personal contact in their conversations, the experience of Group Reunion in their table discussions and life in community through the talks (rollos) and table discussions (decurias). If this, the three-day weekend, the ideal of Christian life, has been sufficiently attractive, and if leaders in Cursillo carry their commitment to the Cursillo Movement beyond weekends to the Ultreyas, then it should be possible to continue to hold these high ideals before the Cursillistas. Through prayer, self-sacrifice and loving service, the Ultreya can then become what it was meant to be.

The purpose of the Cursillo Movement is to make it possible for us to know Christ, to share Christ and to bring Christ into our communities and out into the world, linking Christians together in action. What is the role of the Ultreya in this? It is the way to provide the linkage.

## **What is an Ultreya gathering meant to be?**

- A place where all the permanent Group Reunions get together and are revitalised by sharing with others;
- A place where new Cursillistas are welcomed and become part of the larger community;
- A place for growth and continuing conversion for all of us, where help is provided in beginning a relationship for personal spiritual guidance,
- where we find personal support through the sharing of each other's experiences of living with Jesus Christ,
- where we are inspired by the Witness Talks to be courageous in transforming our environments for Christ.

Ultreya ideally expresses the spirit of Cursillo, which is the awareness that we are saints and apostles - not only in the exciting atmosphere of the weekend, but also saints and apostles in the natural and normal (and sometimes not so exciting) events of our day-to-day living. We learn more deeply that we are not alone. We are linked together in the love, the fellowship, the encouragement of our brother and sister saints and apostles.

### **Practical Matters**

1. Each Diocesan Secretariat has the responsibility for determining where Ultreyas will be established.
2. The size may vary from just enough people for one Group Reunion, plus a Spiritual Adviser. The quality of Christ-centered participation is more

important than large numbers.

3. Having an accessible meeting place with enough parking and rooms available for the large and smaller group meetings is fairly essential, though everything can be done in one large room. It helps everyone concentration if there is no traffic passing through from other activities.
4. In the original plan the Ultreya was not meant to be a four course meal, but more like a good all-natural fast-food stop. So it should not be more than an hour long.
5. It should be informal, but it should always follow the same pattern, so that people can count on dropping in when they are able, and not being kept out too late.

## **The Ultreya Format**

Here is a sample schedule for what is called a "Primitive Ultreya" (which means the simplest, most basic Ultreya; as the founders envisioned it).

Before the Ultreya, the leaders meet, after seeing that the room is properly set up. For a half hour they have their own Group Reunion,

- *praying* for the well-being of the Ultreya,
- *studying* all its aspects, and
- *planning* action to build a true community of support.

In some Dioceses, other permanent Group Reunions meet at the same time, in separate areas, so that people don't have to plan another evening out.

As people arrive, they are introduced and guided into groups of three or four, (chairs have been arranged this

way, ahead of time), with leaders and experienced Cursillistas interspersed among the newer Cursillistas. Latecomers can then be placed here and there. Singing as people arrive might be a good way to begin.

- A. One of the leaders opens the Ultreya with a prayer. If there are those in the group who don't know each other, each person gives name, town and parish,. The leader then suggests that the members of the group share their moments closest to Christ, then piety, study and action, using the service card. The floating Group Reunion sharing will not, of course, be as deep as in a permanent Group Reunion, but it will be more immediate. The purpose of Ultreya Group Reunion is to provide contacts with Christians from as many different backgrounds as possible. In that way each person gains insights into the ways others live as Christians and each of us contributes to the growth of others. Often it is in the floating group that people find others with whom to form a permanent Group Reunion. During this time the Spiritual Adviser for the evening is available for counsel, to speak with those who need help in beginning Spiritual Direction or to help them in finding guidance.
- B. The leader gives a five-minute warning towards the end, so that any who have not had a chance to speak may do so.
- C. The chairs are rearranged and the meeting is continued with a ten-minute lay witness talk, which is the central feature of this part of the Ultreya, given by one Cursillista who is living fully the Fourth day. (Guidelines for this speaker are provided at the end of this article).
- D. Two or three Cursillistas from different backgrounds are asked to respond to the talk, relating it to their own

lives. They are asked to show how similar action for Christ has been possible in their own environments, or to affirm the principle of Christian life and witness which the speaker has presented.

- E. The responses are followed by a five or ten minute spiritual reflection by a Spiritual Advisor, tying all the contributions into the Gospel. This is the teaching phase of the Ultreya and is intended to help the Cursillista centre his or her own everyday life in Jesus Christ. Keeping in mind that Cursillo is an evangelising movement of the Church, the comments of the spiritual advisor should challenge and encourage the participants to continue spiritually in their Fourth Days as evangelists.
- F. It is permissible to involve priests and deacons who have not attended Cursillo in this function, although the lay witness and responses should be from active Cursillistas.
- G. If no priest or deacon is available, the responses can be extended to a discussion led by the Ultreya leader.
- H. Those attending should leave with one clear main thought which has been presented by the witness speaker, the responses, and Gospel summary – an encouraging message for their daily lives in Christ.
- I. Following brief announcements of Cursillo events, an informal prayer time may be conducted by the Spiritual Advisor or leaders.
- J. All this should take no more than an hour.

## **Keep it Simple**

Over the years a number of things have been added to the original or basic Ultreya, and all from the best motives. However, in the interest of keeping this form of

encouragement simple, **Primitive Ultreya does not include any of the following things:** a special theme for the evening; any teaching about Cursillo, or celebration of the Eucharist.

The theme of each Ultreya is transforming the world for Christ, and it is important not to be distracted from that crucial task. Each Ultreya is meant to be Christ-centred, not Cursillo centred; concentrating not on the workings of Cursillo; but on Jesus working within us to bring the whole world to Himself.

Any open and committed person should be able to feel perfectly at home at an Ultreya-regardless of church background or spiritual experience, finding strength and courage to take Jesus Christ back into events and surroundings of everyday life. Any such person should be welcome at Ultreya and Group Reunion. It is not necessary to make a 3-day weekend part of the Fourth Day programme, in fact the Fourth-Day programme is no more and no less than a model for normal Christian life, combining the elements personal piety and Spiritual Guidance, a small group of Christian friends (Group Reunion) and a larger community for the support and encouragement of Christian life and witness in the world (The Ultreya). This is a major reason that Cursillo is not in competition with, but rather an integral part of, the institutional Church.

And finally, although there may well be a parish Eucharist scheduled before or after the Ultreya, it is important to the well-being of both the Cursillo Movement and the life of the parish or parishes represented in the Ultreya that everyone understands three important things. The

Eucharist is not part of the Ultreya; there is no such thing as a "Cursillo Eucharist"; Ultreya preceded or followed by Eucharist should never appear to be a substitute for or a rival of each persons deep involvement in the liturgical life of his or her own church community.

## **The Ultreya Leaders**

The success of the Ultreya, the literature tells us, presupposes two things. Existing permanent Group Reunions to build the pattern of open sharing and mutual support and a group of dedicated leaders. What about them? Who are they and what do they do? First of all, the Ultreya leaders are a servant group. They are a working Group Reunion who attend the Ultreya for the sake of others, not chiefly for themselves. The leaders group might include five or six people, one being the Spiritual Advisor, one a coordinator, one who is chiefly responsible for selecting and working with speakers, and one to take care of the necessary physical details, such as set-up, supplies, and so on. Other members might share tasks as they arise. There is no set way for this group to be formed or selected, such as election or appointment. Each Ultreya evolves its own leaders group under the guidance of the Secretariat. Ultreya is the place where the solid, continuing work of conversion goes on. It is where we are continually confronted with Jesus' divine commission to bring all of our environments under His Lordship and to be bearers of His good news of love and freedom. It is as arduous as any mountain pilgrimage. We need each other's encouragement to be faithful companions as we journey with Jesus on the road to His Father's Kingdom.

## Guidelines for Ultreya Speakers

"Ultreya!" A cry of encouragement! We meet to encourage one another; to inspire one another in our endeavour to bring the world around us to Jesus Christ. You, as a speaker at an Ultreya, have an important part in encouraging your brothers and sisters.

### The Witness Talk

*Ten minutes long (may be shorter, but not longer!) is:*

About **Jesus Christ** - the talk should relate how you live with Christ and how you are trying to bring others to know Him. The aim of the witness talk is not to tell people what they should do, but rather how you love Jesus and how in loving Him you try to bring all those He loves closer to Him in the ordinary circumstances of your life;

About a **recent living experience** - tell how, through prayer, study and action, you are trying to bring others with you to Jesus in the normal flow of your own life. Make just one or two points and build your talk around them. The experience should have been within the six weeks prior to the talk; **concrete and practical** - make your talk vivid by describing who, how, where, why and when, as you tell of carrying out action, which you planned, to bring one of your environments closer to Christ. Tell what happened as a result, whether it seemed like a success or a failure. Be concrete in your conclusions.

Do not feel that you are unworthy of giving a talk. All of us, in striving to be Christians, have many failures in our lives.

But we have some successes too. We all have had moments and experiences in our lives that can be lifted out to share with our friends. This is what your talk should be.

### **Next is what your talk should *NOT* be!**

- *sensational* - a big, flashy production number!!
- *a sermon or instruction* in Christianity, or a Bible teaching
- *too emotional* - other's emotions will be affected by a simple, sincere talk about Christian action. The focus is on Jesus Christ in your life.

### **Questions you may ask yourself to help improve your talk:**

- Does this talk show that Christ is in my life?
- Will it show how much I want to follow Him?
- Does Jesus himself hold the most important place in the talk?
- Will this experience I am sharing stimulate people to think of things they might plan to do to transform their home, work, parish, recreation or other environments for Christ?

### **How should the witness talk be given?**

1. Do palanca. Pray all the way. Jesus reminds us, "Without me you can do nothing."
2. In only ten minutes you can not say too much. It is better to make only one point and make it well and to tell about one experience and tell it clearly than to add more detail or examples. Don't over-prepare: the

simpler the better.

3. Speak clearly, slowly, but informally, as if talking with friends - because you are!
4. Give the theme of your talk to the Spiritual Adviser to help in their preparation. Try to do this a few days in advance of Ultreya, together with any scriptural references you might plan to incorporate.

### **Response Speakers—*one or two minutes each***

Two responding speakers may be chosen in advance, or volunteers may be requested after the witness talk. Their response should be spontaneous and related to the theme of the talk. It is best if these speakers are from different professions or life situations than the speaker, so that they can show that they share in their own experience the same principles of living with Christ and of being witnesses for Him in their different environments.

### **Spiritual Adviser—*five to ten minutes***

Because there is no experience that cannot be related to Scripture, one of your functions is to pull everything together and link it to the Gospel. You are asked not to prepare a formal written talk. The lay witness speaker has been requested to let you know in advance about the theme of his or her talk, together with any Scripture to be used, to help in your preparation. After listening to the witness talk and responses, your task is to draw on your background in the Scripture and relate the talk and responses to some part of the Gospels. Like the witness talk this Gospel summary should be simple and informal. This is the important teaching phase of the Ultreya and is the means by which the Cursillistas grow spiritually in their attempt to interpret the

Gospel in relationship to their daily living.

## APPENDIX I

### **BACC Ultreya Floating Group Reunion**

*(Normally a Group should consist of no more than four people).*

*A Floating Group Reunion should not last more than 30 minutes)*

*Begin with the prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit*

**ALL:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in us the fire of your love.

**LEADER:** Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created.

**ALL** And you shall renew the face of the earth.

**LEADER;** Let us pray

**ALL** Almighty God, who has taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending them the light of your Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Say together the Lord's Prayer.

*Every person in the group is now given an opportunity to share, briefly, in the areas of Piety, Study, and Action which are on the other side of this card. There is no compulsion to share and anyone is free to 'pass 'if they so wish. The group deals first with Piety, then Study, and then Action.*

***This is not a discussion group but a faith sharing.***

***PIETY:*** Share one spiritual aid which brought you closer to Christ this week. Now share one moment in which you felt closest to Christ, and why.

***STUDY:*** Share one thing you have done to understand better your gifts from God. What have you learned?

***ACTION:***

***EITHER:***

If you have had a specific plan for attempting to witness or serve the Lord in some particular area, share one success, or disappointment, you have experienced through this plan.

***OR:***

What unexpected opportunity to witness has the Lord offered you?

***CLOSING PRAYER:***

**All:** We give you thanks Almighty God, for all the benefits you have given us you who live and reign for ever and ever. **AMEN**

