

The Cursillo Movement

Just what is the Cursillo Movement?

The "Cursillo Movement" ("Short course in Christian living") is an international movement; copyrighted by the Roman Catholic Church. A Letter of Agreement authorizes use by the Episcopal Church with certain guidelines and restrictions.

Under the authority of the Bishop of each Diocese, it operates within the guidelines set by the Letter of Agreement and the policies of the Episcopal National Secretariat. The purpose is to strengthen the adult leadership already in the church and other environments – and not compete with them.

In a letter to all clergy this past August, Bishop Bob Fitzpatrick states, "In recent years, one of the more successful and widespread efforts in the National Church to motivate, train, and support the lay leadership of the church has been the Cursillo Movement."

There is a specific, structured, well-thought-out methodology upon which the Movement is established and which has been proven effective. It includes:

- A Weekend, 72-hour basic training for Christian Warriors. It is primarily a lay movement, with spiritual direction from clergy on:
Piety: Prayer, Rule of Life, Relationship with Christ
Study: Bible, Prayer Book, Theology, Inspiration, etc.
Action: Apostolic plan to Christianize environments
- Ongoing weekly small group meetings in which members are mutually accountable for living these principles (this is key to bonding and trust and support needed for effective action).
- Larger area meetings called 'Ultreyas' for sharing, witness, and communication within the Community and exploring ways to bring the "Good News of Jesus Christ" to all environments through planned action, both as individuals and in groups.

History of Cursillo in Hawai'i

The first Weekend in Hawaii for the Episcopal Movement was held in the 70s. With strong and committed lay leadership, the Movement continued to grow so that by the 90s, we held Weekends on Kauai, Oahu, Maui, and the Big Island. We also helped the Methodist Church hold their first Hawai'i weekends of a similar movement called "Walk to Emmaus".

In the late 90s, the leadership changed and for the past several years the only Cursillo activity has been on the Island of Hawai'i, where a group of faithful Cursillistas still hold monthly Ultreyas, with the hope of again having Cursillo weekends and organized apostolic action.

Present Day

Bishop Robert L. Fitzpatrick appointed a committee to evaluate, and advise whether the Movement is viable for "today's Church", and what needs to be done to restore it to strength and effectiveness to help fulfill the Diocesan Plan for the future. He states in his August 2013 letter:

"In the past, the Movement was very active on all Islands and "transformed" many lives. Now, it is in the process of being updated and there is increased interest in promoting it again. There is an Island-wide Ultreya (gathering) planned for this fall for those experienced in Cursillo, as well as those who are interested in learning more about it. Details will be published soon.

LATEST NEWS & EVENTS

The article in the December 2013 E-Chronicle entitled ***There is new life in "Cursillo"!***

The Ultreya (meeting) held November 17, 2013, at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, attracted about fifty people who prayed, shared their Faith, sang songs, laughed, ate, and discussed the future of the Cursillo Movement in Hawaii. In their evaluations those attending gave high marks "across the board."

Several people came over from the Big Island, others had been active in the movement on the mainland, and some were members of similar movements such as the Methodist "Walk to Emmaus" and the Lutheran "Tres Dias." Others came because they were curious and wanted to know what Cursillo was all about.

The "Cursillo" is a lay movement to strengthen people in their Faith, and train and inspire them to be a Christian influence in their respective environments. It starts out with a three day retreat, and is followed by weekly "fourth day" support groups. It was started by the Roman Catholic Church in Spain in the 1940s and quickly spread to the United States and other countries. The Episcopal movement was very active in Hawai'i from the late 1970s, but has tapered off in recent years.

The Ultreya opened with prayer and then participants separated into small groups where each person had an opportunity to briefly share their "Piety, Study, and Action" during the past week. Carol Williams from Arizona, the 2nd Vice President of the National Episcopal Cursillo Board, shared what is happening across the mainland, and had the group think about the possible future of Cursillo in Hawai'i. She pledged that the National Cursillo would be willing to send a team to Hawai'i to train people how to be more effective in "making a friend, being a TRUE friend, and bringing our friend to Christ." Then people had an opportunity to respond to her talk and ask questions.

Bishop Robert Fitzpatrick gave an inspiring talk about what is happening in the larger Church,

the plans for the future in the Diocese of Hawai'i, and the roll Cursillo might play. He said that since the Cursillo was a "Lay Movement" it was up to the people to decide what they wanted to do, and he pledged his support.

The meeting closed with a large prayer circle where people could thank God and ask for guidance. Kelly Connell and David Jones from the St. Nicholas band then led the singing as long as people wanted to stay and finish off the delicious finger food.

Even though some could not attend the Ultreya, they communicated by phone and letters how important the Cursillo Movement was to their lives. One couple called from Washington State, indicating the positive effect the Movement had on their lives, and urging it to be reactivated.

A man on Kaua'i shared that on his weekend they stood overlooking the Waimea Canyon as the sun rose, and prayed silently and aloud. He said, "I gained a deeper and more meaningful understanding of Christ and my Faith, both my strengths and my weaknesses."

A Doctor wrote that she hoped for a resurgence of Cursillo in the Diocese. "In our weekly Group Reunion, our friendships have endured and deepened as we share our secular and our faith lives in depth."

A lady who attended *Episcopal Cursillo No. 1* in 1977, wrote that when she was invited, she was too busy to take time away from her real estate business but succumbed. It was a "mountain top experience, a profound spiritual experience, and I didn't want to come down." She has been living her *Fourth Day* in a group for over thirty years.

The Planning Committee was so pleased with the Ultreya and its evaluations that they have decided to schedule another one in three months, while they decide what their options are for the future. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Cursillo Movement, [send an e-mail](#) to Fr. John Connell, or call him at (808) 626-3409.