



“Cursillo? What’s that?”

Interview by Nicole Cayer, Communications Director, Ottawa Anglican Cursillo Movement (OACM) with Colleen Mayo-Pankhurst, Lay Rector, Women’s 128th Anglican Cursillo Weekend

Nicole: For our readers who are unfamiliar with it, what is Cursillo?

Colleen: It’s a worldwide movement with roots in several Christian denominations. Cursillo seeks to foster, develop, and sustain Christian leaders and encourage apostleship. The OACM has the blessing of the Bishop of Ottawa and many clergy have attended a weekend.

Nicole: What’s a Cursillo weekend?

Colleen: It’s a three-day residential course providing participants with tools to live the Christian life more fully, with a resulting impact on the world. But it’s much more than a course; it’s experiential learning through talks, small group discussions, communal meals, worship, music, and lots of laughs and fellowship. I’ve formed strong bonds with Christians I’ve met throughout the diocese at Cursillo events.

Nicole: When are the next weekends?

Colleen: The upcoming Women’s Weekend is Nov. 22-24, 2019. The next Men’s Weekend is May 29-31, 2020. Recently, they’ve been held at La Maison Notre-Dame-de-la-Providence in Orleans. Offering simple three-course meals, the sisters provide a very welcoming environment for a retreat.

Nicole: Who should consider attending a weekend?

Colleen: It’s impossible to define an ideal participant just as we can’t describe the average Canadian. However, most candidates are practising Christians who desire a closer relationship with God and Jesus. Many are already active in their parishes; some are new to Christian worship; and many have questions about the church and their faith. People from 18-88 come from churches all over the diocese, not only Anglican, and are at different stages in their journeys with God.

Nicole: Who is a Lay Rector?

Colleen: The Lay Rector is entrusted by the OACM, with the Bishop’s approval, to select a group of people who have attended a Cursillo weekend, called Cursillistas, to collaborate on planning and delivering the course. The team includes two priests and up to 19 laity who prepare talks and lead worship and music.

Nicole: What does a weekend cost?

Colleen: Attending a weekend is made possible by a financial gift from other Cursillistas. Their donations cover all the expenses including a private room, three meals daily, endless snacks, and all program-associated costs. I think it is a dramatic testament to the value of the experience.

Nicole: How does registration work?

Colleen: The application is on our website (www.oacm.ca). Beyond completing it, a candidate needs a sponsor (a Cursillista who promises to support the applicant and answer questions that arise before or after the weekend) and the signature of their parish priest. If you don’t know who in your community are Cursillistas, contact OACM and we’ll help you find some.

-- Provided by David McCreery on behalf of OACM