

THE CURSILLO LEADER

Cursillo leaders are people who are already identified as people of faith. They are persons who attract others to them and manifest a trusting presence and confidence. They are not necessarily persons in charge of anything, but people who have the potential to influence those around them.

After attending an Episcopal Cursillo Weekend, these Christians support their environments and evangelize them by virtue of their leadership qualities. They attend Group Reunions and Ultreyas to strengthen their commitment to bringing the world to Christ. Even though they may not necessarily hold positions of prominence, one can see the influence of these Cursillistas in the parish and diocese. These leaders are the primary source of evangelism for Cursillo. They are filled with the vision of Christian conversion and of what can be accomplished by Cursillo.

Inviting promising leaders does not preclude those who offer their participation in the community; it simply encourages the involvement of people who might not otherwise step forward.

Most Cursillistas are active in parish and diocesan ministries as well as serving on the Secretariat and Servant Communities. Both are a serious enterprise. It is good stewardship to involve people who are truly willing and able to make their leadership role a primary commitment.

The Cursillo leader is not restricted to any one part of the ministry. The role of the leader is to strive to set an example in terms of living in grace and using the Cursillo Method. A leader is not a technician, an organizer, or a speaker but a person who lives the Christian life to the fullest and takes the opportunity to share it with others.

A MINISTRY OF LEADERSHIP

Persons who strive to become members of the Secretariat or a Servant Community should understand that primarily they come together as a Group Reunion of those who have made Cursillo a central part of their apostolic action. These people should be committed to the Cursillo Method, especially the Fourth Day, and growing understanding of the Cursillo Ministry as a whole.

Since Cursillo does not function independently of the diocesan structure, members of the Secretariat and Servant Communities should be active in their parishes and supportive of the Episcopal Church. And, as active members of the Jesus Movement, they should be willing to support relationships, evangelism, and reconciliation in the world.

LEADERSHIP BASICS:

- *Seeks through prayer and study, the guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit for the Ministry as a whole;*
- *Promotes unity, love and trust among members of the Ministry;*
- *Models the vital expression of the Cursillo Method (especially Group Reunion);*
- *Studies environments to be evangelized;*
- *Focuses the efforts of Cursillo leaders on the work of bringing Christ into those environments.*
- *Empowers the Cursillo community in the fulfillment of the mission to bring others to Christ;*
- *Guides the organization so that it can remain viable for the future.*

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THE SECRETARIAT

The diocesan body with responsibility for the life and direction of the Cursillo Ministry in a diocese is called the Secretariat. It is formed and functions under the authority of the Bishop of the diocese. In the event that the Secretariat represents an area encompassing more than one diocese, the Secretariat must work under the authority of all bishops involved.

The Secretariat consists of a group of leaders, lay and Clergy, who are selected by the Cursillo community and confirmed by the Bishop(s). The structure of the Secretariat should be simple, flexible, and focused on its mission of empowering the Cursillo Ministry. It is a body that meets in group reunion to coordinate and administer the functions and operations of the Ministry within the diocese(s).

Each diocesan Cursillo Ministry will have its own by-laws, and its own rules for selection of Secretariat members. The by-laws should follow guidelines for best practices of administrative and financial management. Secretariat officers listed in the bylaws should include a president, secretary, treasurer, and a Bishop Liaison. Other positions and the size of the Secretariat depend upon the size and activities of the Community.

The Secretariat coordinates the efforts of the local ministries — one or more Servant Communities and/or other Cursillistas striving to actively follow the Ministry within their designated service area. It is also the central body that insures required responsibilities are accomplished (i.e., fiscal management, communications, education, etc.)

As a servant body, the Secretariat derives its guidance from two sources:

1. The Bishop(s) and Diocese -- The ministry of the Episcopal Church as expressed in the community's diocese is Cursillo's focus. The Cursillo Ministry looks to the Bishop(s) to guide it and to point out how participants may assist the overall mission of the Church in that place and time.
2. The Community -- Cursillo draws upon the lay and clerical members of the Church whose calling has been identified as active, committed Christian witnesses. Participants in the Cursillo community seek ways to use their gifts and offer their labors to the glory of God in an effective way.

STRUCTURE OF THE SECRETARIAT

Although described as a support group, the Secretariat does have a practical reason for being. Their functional responsibilities should be considered as part of their gift to the Ministry. Participating through the Secretariat is just one of many valuable ways to serve.

A network of resources exists to help further the work of the Cursillo in each diocese. The ECMC District Representatives are servants of the Secretariats. Members should know who their representative is and remain in contact. The ECM web site: www.episcopalcurstilloministry.org is a helpful resource.

The ideal is for dioceses to have one Servant Community, however the geographic size of the diocese may cause logistical problems. In such cases, a diocese may have more than one Servant Community. Coordination of those communities becomes vital in order to have a productive Servant Community all of the individual Servant Communities should be under the same Secretariat leadership. The Servant Communities should come together at least annually, if not quarterly, for a joint meeting. They should also maintain ongoing communication with each other and be supportive of each other through the sharing of resources and expertise.

TASKS OF THE SECRETARIAT

The Cursillo Ministry in the Episcopal Church reflects the variety and the intensity of our Church as a whole. In every place things are done differently due to experience, custom, and practicality. Being conscientious stewards of the functional tasks, the organizational body will be effective and, reflect the "servant ministry" which Jesus taught.

The Secretariat is called upon to:

1. *Promote the Cursillo Ministry.*
 - It should seek to foster a full understanding of Cursillo and the complete Cursillo Method. This is defined as following the intent and process of the Ministry. The Secretariat should keep current with the publications of the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry.
2. *Maintain a relationship with the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry Committee.*
 - Promote Cursillo by maintaining close ties with the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry Committee and the ECM District Representative.
 - Recognize and take advantage of the valuable resources available from ECM.

- Maintain communication with ECM so that it can better respond to local needs.
 - Understand that faithful and fruitful implementation of the Cursillo Method rather than strict adherence to rules and regulations is the ideal.
3. *Provide appropriate structure for nurturing the Cursillo Ministry and its community by:*
- Insuring that bylaws approved by the Bishop(s) are in place
4. *Guide the workings of the Servant Community(s)* to ensure that attention is given to:*
- Providing and supporting people chosen to serve on Episcopal Cursillo Weekends.
 - Continually studying the Cursillo Method and environments to apply the method in an immediate and realistic way.
 - Creating Christian community where leaders are formed into an effective apostolic team by studying, working, praying, and supporting each other in the work of the ministry.
- * *Because of the different volunteer capacities and geographic configurations of Secretariats across the country, some tasks may be more effectively shared with or delegated to the Servant Community(s). However, it will still be the Secretariat's responsibility to see that these tasks are accomplished.*
5. *The Secretariat fosters and maintains a supportive relationship with the Secretariat's bishop(s) by:*
- Regularly seeking input and approval from the Bishop(s), to develop and follow a Pastoral Plan.
 - Maintaining regular communication and encourage participation in Ministry events where possible.
 - Working to build knowledge about the Cursillo Ministry and encouraging his/her future attendance, if the Bishop has not attended a Cursillo Weekend,
 - Insuring that Diocese staff is also kept informed about the Ministry and Cursillo events.
6. *Work with the Servant Community, to establish policies and procedures that encourage an active Fourth Day program. Members should:*
- Demonstrate concern for the Fourth Day in all its work through active participation and ongoing communication.
 - Be active in Group Reunion.
 - Foster, promote, and attend Ultreyas.
 - Insure that Weekends strongly promote the Fourth Day, and that volunteers are active participants in Fourth Day.
 - Insure that candidates and sponsors are educated in the responsibility and personal benefits of actively participating in Fourth Day.
 - Articulate and model the Fourth Day for the larger community, giving special assistance and leadership to groups experiencing difficulty.
 - Provide training for candidate sponsors for the Weekends, including the duties and the commitment of sponsorship.
7. *Work with the Servant Community(s) to coordinate requests for Palanca with the community by:*
- Insuring that scheduled Episcopal Cursillo Weekends are announced and that the regional, national, and international communities are invited to offer Palanca.
 - Emphasizing that Palanca is first and foremost prayer for guidance and support of the participants of the Three-Day Weekend -- not gifts, gimmicks, or goods.
8. *Work with the Servant Community, to support communication with Cursillo Community as a whole by:*
- Insuring contact information is collected and regularly maintained.
 - Providing regular outlets for information such as a newsletter in a combination of media most suitable for the community whether printed or electronic.
 - Developing and distributing informational materials describing upcoming Three-Day Weekend and Fourth Day events.
 - Distributing ECM brochures and ECM Library materials.
 - Including the ECMC District Representative on all contact lists and sharing newsletters, materials, invitations, event notices, etc.
9. *Work with the Servant Community to insure that fiscal management of funds supporting Cursillo activities are properly collected and managed by:*
- Encouraging the development and use of budgets for Weekends or other large events.
 - Following appropriate record keeping standards and procedures in all fiscal matters.
 - Stating clearly the proposed use of funds in any published donation request.

THE SERVANT COMMUNITY

The Servant Community is an essential element of any Diocesan Cursillo Ministry. It functions as the "working arm" of the Secretariat by actively supporting the Cursillo Weekend and the Fourth Day. The purpose of the Servant Community is to implement the Cursillo Method. A diocese has the beginning of a Servant Community when there is a core of Cursillo leaders, who have chosen to work inside the Ministry. Their apostolic action is being committed to a community of service to the Ministry, especially to the Fourth Day needs of Cursillistas. A Cursillo Ministry can only be as good as its leaders. And, a local ministry is fully embedded in Cursillo when it has a Servant Community. This group of leaders should strive to exemplify everything Cursillo is supposed to be.

Each servant community has its own individual characteristics and personality. It is difficult to define an organization structure that has application to every Community. The structure and meeting format is determined by the needs, goals, and possibilities within the individual communities. As the Servant Community forms, it develops its role in relationship to the Secretariat and the Pastoral Plan. The Ministry is strong because the Secretariat and Servant Community support each other and maintain ongoing communication.

While the ideal is for a diocese to have one Servant Community, the geographic size of the diocese may cause logistical problems. In such cases, a diocese may have more than one Servant Community. Coordination of multiple communities becomes vital in order to be productive. It is strongly suggested that all of the individual Servant Communities be under the same leadership of the Secretariat. All the Servant Communities should come together annually, if not quarterly, for a joint meeting.

The Secretariat oversees the overall aspects of the Servant Community. The Servant Community is organized into committees and it is in the committees that it does the work of the Ministry. Suggested committees are Weekend Preparation (pre-cursillo), Three Day Weekend, Fourth Day, and communications /publications. Other committees may be determined by the needs of the local community. The needs of the diocese and the Secretariat will determine the scope and development of each committee. Information and work flows to the Servant Community from the Secretariat through the committees. It is possible to have Secretariat members also serving with the Servant Community, but members of the two groups should not completely overlap.

BEGINNING A SERVANT COMMUNITY

In the process of forming a Servant Community it is important to remember that God is the master architect and builder; Jesus Christ, is the cornerstone. It is important to keep this focus for "Unless the Lord builds this house, those who build it labor in vain". (Ps 127:1a)

The first step in formation to gather a group of Cursillistas, lay and clergy, who have shown leadership and commitment to serve the Lord. They create a bond by sharing group reunion, studying, and praying together. The primary study should be the publications available on the ECM website. This is not a time for other tasks, but instead a time for forming community. The amount of time this step takes will depend on the group. It could take weeks, months, or even a year, but the Servant Community truly begins its existence at this point.

As the Servant Community forms, it begins to work within the vision of the Secretariat for their diocese and the shape it will take in their Cursillo community. Each community will then develop necessary committees according to their needs and key tasks. There is no right way to do Servant Community, however, there are guidelines to help. The Holy Spirit empowers the leaders of the Ministry to do God's will. It is important to be open to change and to be flexible. The shape of the Servant Community, will change to meet the needs of the larger community. It is this evolution and development which moves us forward.

The how-to is simple; the doing is more complex. Much depends on the openness, honesty and sharing done in Christian love that takes place during the grouping and discussion following the study sessions. The most important element is perseverance!

- **SECRETARIATS AND SERVANT COMMUNITIES ARE NOT ESTABLISHED TO JUST DO SOMETHING — THEY ARE TO BE SOMETHING.**
- **THEY ARE TO CREATE A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION WHERE LEADERS ARE FORMED INTO AN EFFECTIVE APOSTOLIC TEAM.**
- **THEY ARE TO STUDY TOGETHER, WORK TOGETHER, PRAY TOGETHER AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN THEIR MINISTRY.**

***THE WORK OF CURSILLO IS THE WORK OF THE WHOLE CHURCH.
A CURSILLO LEADER IS ONE WHO HELPS THE CURSILLO COMMUNITY BY
“WALKING THEIR TALK” AND SHOWING THE WAY IN WITNESS AND
LOVE. JESUS DID NOT GIVE PETER A POSITION OR TITLE, BUT A
DIRECTIVE TO SERVE: “FEED MY SHEEP.”
A LEADER IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A SERVANT.***

LEADERSHIP MEETING FORMATS

The agenda for a Secretariat meeting should always include group reunion, prayer, administrative reports, and updates on events. Meetings provide an opportunity to study Cursillo literature, develop or support the annual Pastoral Plan, or review other old or new business. It is recommended that Secretariats meet at least quarterly. When longer travel distances are involved, consider on-line connections.

It is recommended that Servant Communities meet monthly. The group structure and the number of members and committees involved will impact the length of the meetings. Always give the planning and implementation of your Ministry goals the time and attention they deserve. And, make the sessions participatory, interesting, creative and fun. As the working arm of the Secretariat, Servant Communities have subcommittees to fulfill ongoing tasks that include:

- Weekend Preparation -- Study of environments, selection of leaders within targeted environments, study of specific literature related to the Weekend Preparation (Pre-Cursillo).
- Three-Day Weekend — Assist with the team formation, organize and encourage palanca, organize physical needs of the Weekend, study the literature relative to the Weekend.
- Fourth Day — Coordinate Ultreyas and help leaders establish group reunions, visit Ultreya as to provide guidance to Ultreya leaders, help establish regional Ultreyas, study literature concerning the Fourth Day, and encourage development of new leadership in all phases of the Ministry.
- Communications/Publications — Develop communication methods such as newsletters and websites, and email and/or telephone chains for disbursement of time sensitive information to the larger community

Leadership meetings can last up to 2 ½ hours depending upon the work and size of the group — Secretariat or Servant Community. This format is recommended because it is the most nourishing for the leadership community. Flexibility is important—if an activity needs extra attention, allot more time. Discussion time is also an important consideration. Newly formed groups or groups with frequent turnover should spend more time with ongoing education and discussion about the Ministry through Doctrinal and Technique Talks based upon ECM Publications.

1. Prayer for the Gift of the Holy Spirit.
2. Group Reunion — The Leaders Group Reunion format below is used. This reunion is the longterm **key to success** for the group. Everything depends on this personal sharing time, community building, and the encouragement it provides. This reunion of leaders is where sharing takes place and the community is formed into an Apostolic Team. As leaders within the Ministry, “Study” is from the Cursillo literature and “Action” involves the environment of Cursillo.
3. Doctrinal Talk — The Spiritual Advisor or a clergy member of the group gives this talk. Its intent is to contribute to the spiritual growth and development of the leaders. Discussion time should be allowed.
4. Technique Talk — This is where ECM publications, describing the Cursillo Ministry, are studied. The technique talk is intended to help leaders grow in knowledge of Cursillo by explaining the various elements of the Method. A lay member of the Servant Community gives the talk followed by discussion,.
5. Work Session — Allow time for subcommittees to carry out the work of the Ministry, study, and plan for the future.
6. Reports — A summary report from each subcommittee is given to the general meeting and included in its minutes. The Secretariat will evaluate and make plan for appropriate action based on the reports from the Servant Community.
7. Announcements — This is a time to share what is happening within the Cursillo community and the diocese.
8. Closing prayers.

LEADERS' GROUP EVALUATION

It is helpful to evaluate the effectiveness of any leadership group on a regular basis. Some suggested questions are listed, but each Community may wish to develop others that are relative to their own individual needs, goals and objectives.

1. How do the members of the Leaders' Group understand Cursillo as a vocation, a calling from God?
2. Does the Leaders' Group share a common understanding of the Cursillo Ministry within the diocese? Explain.
3. How is the Leaders' Group a Christian community in action, serving each other and the larger Cursillo community, especially in the Fourth Day environment?
4. Is there a growing understanding of how the Cursillo Ministry fits into the mission of the Church and the work of the diocese? How is this happening or not happening?
5. Is the Leaders' Group making an impact on the Cursillo Ministry in the Diocese? Explain.

AN ORDER OF GROUP REUNION FOR CURSILLO LEADERS

Prayer for the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in us the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy Your consolations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- I. Prayer
- II. Review your commitment as a leader in the Cursillo Community in the following areas:
 - A. Piety
 1. Share your recent experience with a group reunion and an Ultreya.
 2. Share what you have gained from Spiritual Direction since the last meeting.
 3. Share what has been your palanca for the Community.
 4. Share your moment closest to Christ since the last meeting.
 - B. Study
 1. Share the environments you are studying.
 2. Share what else you are studying and how you are trying to apply it in your life and to your work in Cursillo.
 - C. Apostolic Leadership in Action
 1. Share what you have done to select leaders in environments.
 2. Share ways in which you have helped others draw closer to Christ, such as through group reunions.
 3. Share other ways that you showed Christ's love to others.
- III. Share the ways in which you fulfilled your obligations as a leader:
 - A. In your assignment with Cursillo
 - B. Other Projects
- IV. Share your plans for the next month with regard to leadership within the Cursillo community.

Closing Prayers

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and further us with your continual help that in all our works begun, continued and ended in you, we may glorify your holy Name, and finally by your mercy obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imagination, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.