Episcopal Cursillo Ministry

Leading Through Service: A Guide for Cursillo Leadership and Community

The Purpose of Cursillo Leadership

The Episcopal Cursillo Ministry exists to form Christian leaders who bring others to Christ through evangelism, reconciliation, and faithful service. Leadership in Cursillo is less about a position or title and more about the way we live, serve, and influence others.

We are Cursillo leaders when we draw others through a trusting presence, confidence, and a visible commitment to Christ. We may or may not hold formal leadership positions. Our influence can be seen in the parish, diocese, workplace, family, and other places where we live out our faith.

As Cursillo leaders, we strive to:

- **Live** as an authentic witness to Jesus Christ.
- **Lead** through prayer, humility, example, and service.
- **Participate** actively in the Fourth Day through Group Reunion and Ultreya.
- **Support** the life and mission of the parish and diocese.
- **Continue growing** through prayer, study, and Christian action.
- **Encourage** others to grow as disciples and leaders.
- **Make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ.**

Leadership is measured first by our faithfulness to Christ and our willingness to serve others, resulting in growth in our ministry's effectiveness.

Leadership as Christian Community

When we serve in Cursillo leadership, we are invited into a deeper experience of Christian community. At our best, the Secretariat and the Fourth Day/Servant Community are groups of Christians who pray, study, share, discern, and serve together. See the ECM Publication "Leaders Group Reunion."

Our strength comes from seeing our service not simply as a collection of tasks, but as an expression of our own Fourth Day and apostolic action. Group Reunion is especially

important because it creates space for honest sharing, encouragement, accountability, and the formation of an apostolic team.

Prayer, study, and action remain at the heart of our community:

- **Prayer** keeps us centered on God and open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- **Study** deepens our understanding of Scripture, the Cursillo Method, and our place within the Church.
- **Action** carries that understanding into the **places wh**ere we live and serve.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat is the diocesan leadership body responsible for the overall direction and life of the Cursillo Ministry under the authority of the Bishop. **We come together as lay and clergy leaders to listen, discern, coordinate, and support the ministry.**

The Secretariat is both a leadership team and a Group Reunion. We can keep its structure simple and flexible, adapting it to the size, geography, and needs of the local Cursillo community.

Our work generally includes:

- Providing spiritual and organizational leadership.
- Supporting and guiding Fourth Day/Servant Communities.
- Nurturing an understanding of the Cursillo Method and Fourth Day.
- Maintaining relationships with the Bishop, diocese, clergy, and the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry Committee (ECMC).
- Supporting appropriate bylaws, policies, financial practices.
- Supporting communication via regular newsletters, maintaining a database for the Fourth Day community, and help from diocesan and other resources.
- Providing support and leadership materials to Weekend Lay Rectors and other Fourth Day leaders well in advance of events. Examples: weekend schedules, team selection guidelines, team and candidate application procedures.
- Seeking specific help from the ECMC when needed.
- Encouraging sponsorship, Palanca, leadership development, and Fourth Day participation.
- Developing and supporting a diocesan Pastoral Plan if appropriate.
- Listening for and responding to the needs and gifts of the Cursillo community.

The Secretariat’s guidance comes from both the Bishop, diocese and the Cursillo community. Together, these relationships help us remain connected to the mission of the Episcopal Church while drawing on the gifts and experience within our Cursillo community.

The Fourth Day/Servant Community

The Fourth Day/Servant Community is the working arm of the Secretariat. It brings our prayerful leadership and practical service together in support of the Three-Day Weekend and, especially, the Fourth Day.

This community begins with a core of Cursillistas who feel called to serve the ministry. Our Servant Communities may look different from one diocese to another. Geography, available volunteers, local needs, and the size of the community all influence how we develop.

Rather than following a single organizational model, we can allow our Fourth Day/Servant Community to remain flexible and responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Our work may include:

- Preparing for and supporting Three-Day Cursillo Weekends.
- Strengthening Group Reunions and Ultreyas.
- Encouraging Fourth Day participation and Christian formation.
- Developing new leaders.
- Coordinating Palanca and sponsorship.
- Supporting communications and publications.
- Promoting Cursillo events and support directly to parishes and other groups.
- Sharing resources and expertise within the Cursillo community.
- Providing practical support for events and other ministry needs.

We can organize committees around the needs of our local ministry. Common areas include Weekend Preparation, Three-Day Weekend, Fourth Day, and Communications/Publications, with other structures added as appropriate.

Working Together

The Secretariat and Fourth Day/Servant Community have distinct roles, but we are closely connected in our work. The Secretariat provides overall direction and support, while the Fourth Day Community carries much of the ministry’s ongoing work.

Healthy collaboration can include:

- Regular communication and shared discernment.
- Prayer before planning.
- A common understanding of the Cursillo Method.
- Mutual encouragement and support.
- Clear but flexible responsibilities.
- Shared attention to the Fourth Day.
- Openness to new ideas and changing circumstances.

In larger or geographically dispersed dioceses, more than one Fourth Day/Servant Community may be helpful. When that happens, we need to stay especially connected. **Shared leadership, regular communication, and opportunities to gather help us maintain one Cursillo community.**

Growing a Fourth Day/Servant Community

Forming a Servant Community is itself a process of building Christian community. We begin not by assigning tasks, but by coming together to pray, share, study, and grow in our understanding of Cursillo.

The process may take weeks, months, or longer. There is no single timetable or prescribed structure. As the community grows, we can discern together how our gifts and circumstances might best serve the ministry.

Important elements include:

- Prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit.
- Group Reunion and honest sharing.
- Study of Scripture and ECMC resources.
- Growing together in Christian community.
- Listening and responding to the needs of the local ministry.
- Willingness to adapt as needs change.
- Perseverance.

The goal is not simply to create an organization that gets things done. **Our goal is to form a community of Christians whose service reflects the life and spirit of Cursillo.**

Leadership Meetings

Leadership meetings can provide both spiritual nourishment and time for ministry work.

Meetings might include:

1. Prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit
2. Group Reunion
3. Spiritual or doctrinal reflection
4. Study of the Cursillo Method or ECMC resources
5. Committee work and ministry planning
6. Reports and communication
7. Announcements and upcoming events
8. Closing prayer

We can adapt the format to the needs of our group. Newly formed teams or groups experiencing significant transition may benefit from added time for study, discussion, and getting to know one another and the ministry more deeply. Online meetings can also help when geography makes person-to-person gatherings difficult.

A Healthy Cursillo Community

A healthy Cursillo ministry is more than effective programming. Regular reflection can help us ask:

- Are we growing in our understanding of Cursillo as a vocation and calling from God?
- Do we share a common understanding of the ministry and its purpose?
- Are we experiencing Christian community as we serve together?
- Is our work connected to the mission of the Church and the diocese?
- Are we helping strengthen the Fourth Day?
- Are new leaders being encouraged and developed?
- Is our ministry helping people encounter Christ and live their faith more fully?

Our Shared Mission

The Secretariat and Fourth Day/Servant Community are more than organizational structures. We are living Christian communities where we grow together through prayer, study, fellowship, and service.

Together, we help create an environment where we can deepen our relationship with Christ, strengthen their Fourth Day, serve the Church, and witness to the Gospel in the places where we live and serve.

At the heart of Cursillo leadership is a simple calling: to live faithfully, serve humbly, encourage one another, and help bring the world to Christ.