

Canadian Anglican Cursillo



SUCCESSION PLANNING

What is succession planning? Based upon Wikipedia, “Succession planning is a process - for identifying and developing new leaders - who can replace veteran leaders - when they leave, retire or die.” It entails first identifying, then developing internal people with the potential to fill key positions, thus increasing the availability of experienced and capable people, that are prepared to assume these roles as they become available. In all types of organizations, succession planning is crucial to keep organizations running by ensuring the leadership operates at peak efficiency.

Here are five steps for doing this:

- 1) Identify those with potential or willingness
- 2) Identify the gaps
- 3) Develop the person’s knowledge
- 4) Engage the person in leadership
- 5) Improve the person’s commitment

It should be no surprise then that Cursillo, as an organization, also needs a succession plan.

1st Step - identify those with potential or willingness.

“The criteria for selection must always be based on the effectiveness of the candidate as the leaven of his/her environment and circumstances.” If you are not a friend of the candidate, it is hard to know their potential or their circumstances. Does it seem like your diocese is mainly focused on having weekends and not incorporating the new Cursillistas into living their fourth day?

With the help of the Cursillo tools for persevering: Group Reunion, and Ultreya, most people can become effective Christian leaders through a life of Piety, Study, and Action. While Group Reunion focuses on the person, the Ultreya focuses on the community. Having the support of a community of believers encourages us to journey in the company of friends. It should not be a surprise that some Canadian Cursillo movements are struggling due to a lack of an active fourth day and an active Servant Community or Leader’s School.

Potential leaders must be active Cursillistas and must do more than just be able to understand and explain the Cursillo mentality. They have made Cursillo a vital part of their lives that it becomes a leavening element in them, inspiring others. The Servant Community or Leader’s School must train and sustain leaders for the Movement. While everyone attending school may not be the next Lay Director for the diocese, it is important that those working teams and serving on the Secretariat are knowledgeable and committed. The Lay Director and one or two key people on the Secretariat, especially if one has human resource experience, can encourage School of Leader attendees to take more of a part in leadership –

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maybe by chairing a committee. Let's not forget the importance of prayer and being open to what God is calling us to do.

Weekend candidates must be prepared for the weekend in view of the Post-cursillo, after all, the rest of our life is more important than the Authentic Cursillo Weekend. A personal and authentic witness of our fourth day should encourage others.

If our sponsors are not committed to fulfilling their responsibilities to their candidates, who steps up? Weekend table leaders, other team members, the Ultreya, or are they left on their own? I'm sure we can all think of many who we believed would be good future leaders, however they didn't stay involved with Cursillo. They may have been called to some other Christian activity, but did we fail to provide the support they needed? It's all our jobs as Cursillistas to help these new Cursillistas after the weekend, not just their sponsors.

2nd Step - Identifying the Gaps

Once we have identified a person or persons interested in a leadership role, and we know their skills and abilities, we compare their skills to the role description. If there are skills missing, we need to train that person for the role, if possible. For example

- if the person is to be treasurer, they should have financial skills (more than balancing a check book) if they do not, they might not be cut out to be treasurer.
- if they are to be secretary, computer skills are a must. Those are trainable.
- if they are to be Servant Community Chair, they should be comfortable speaking in front of groups. If not, maybe start small; witness talk at an Ultreya, move up to a technique talk at Servant Community (which they should be attending), maybe a Talk on a weekend, all the while getting the person more comfortable speaking in front of a group.
- Some dioceses have a position for Assistant Lay Director, training to be a future Lay director.
- Finally, meet with the Spiritual Director to get feedback.

All these are ideas to help bridge the gaps. The Secretariat is to serve the entire Cursillo Movement and needs to incorporate new people into the various positions as the terms come to an end. We are only hurting the movement, if we don't pass on these responsibilities to others.

3rd Step - Develop the Person's Knowledge

There are many ways for a person's knowledge to develop and not always for the best – TV, movies, books, magazines and online sources can be good or bad depending on their content. In the Study Talk during the Authentic Cursillo Weekend, we heard that the best book is the Bible. There are many good Catholic publications available as well. Group Reunion and Ultreya are essential to help sustain and support our Piety, Study, and Action as they keep us accountable. This ongoing conversion is a commitment to serve each other and the work of Cursillo, which is the work of Christ and His Church.

There are many resources for developing a person's knowledge:

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- One obvious resource for developing the person's knowledge is the Leader's School. The School is where we study the writings of our Founder, where we study the Charism and the history of Cursillo. Cursillistas who aspire to serve as leaders in the Cursillo Movement and/or serve as a member of the Secretariat should be attending the School of Leaders.
- Another obvious resource for developing the person's knowledge is to have them read and study the writings of the Founder.
- Another resource is the National Cursillo web site. There are prior & current newsletters, articles, videos, etc.

Did you know there was School of Leaders before the first Cursillo weekends in Mallorca?

School is essential to the continuance and development of the Movement. If we don't have leaders attending Leader's School, how can we hold weekends and support the new Cursillistas in the post-cursillo? This has become a very real problem over recent years as in some dioceses, the use of these books and other sources have almost disappeared.

4th Step - Engage the Person in Leadership.

The first thing a leader should do is get rid of all ambition and desire for power. Humility is an important trait for leadership. As Cursillo leaders we must be concerned about upholding what is right and not be concerned with keeping our position intact. One should not be concerned about "authority" or "control" but rather service, responsibility and accountability. Within the Cursillo Movement, Lay Directors, Spiritual Directors, Secretariat members are called to stand firm on the truth, whether it is popular or not, whether it threatens their "job security" or not. All Cursillistas have an important role, to bring Christ to others, regardless of what their official title may or may not be.

Does the Secretariat or Leader's School encourage the Rector/Rectora and team members to invite new Cursillistas to work the weekend? This is a good way to get new people involved. To often we get into a habit of asking our friends and those who worked prior weekends with us to work again, however this prevents others from sharing this experience. There is much to absorb from the talks and hearing them from another speaker during formation helps increase one's knowledge. Are we striving for the weekend teams to be selected from the School, attending Ultreya, and actively participating in Group Reunion? Those in the conference room and giving the talks need to witness to living their 4th day. I know many dioceses struggle with this, however we should work toward this goal, even if it is a little bit at a time. Maybe we need to evaluate whether we are taking steps to make this a reality or not.

Are we more concerned about keeping a position than getting someone else to step up? Why do we struggle getting others involved?

Having someone to witness at Ultreya or speak to another sort of Cursillo meeting encourages that individual to take a leadership role.

5th Step - Improving the Person's Commitment

Perhaps the biggest challenge in our movements is encouraging and developing commitment among people within the movement at all levels. Commitment is easy to define as we hear in Webster's dictionary, "A commitment is an agreement - or pledge to do something in the future - or a state of being emotionally impelled." Commitment is also about dedication, loyalty, and responsibility. However, there is nothing written in any Cursillo literature that directs individuals to commit themselves to any aspect of the Cursillo Movement as Cursillo respects the freedom of the person.

After the Cursillo Weekend, we were on fire and ready to change ourselves and our environment. I imagine most Cursillistas felt the same. But, how long does that last? If we don't do something to keep the candle burning, it will eventually flicker and go out. Are we allowing our new and current fourth day members to forget what they experienced?

We need to understand what commitment means. We need to determine what obstacles prevent us from increasing our commitment and then what methods we need to overcome these obstacles. By helping others to achieve their full potential in their commitment to the Cursillo movement, we make the movement stronger and more effective.

Some of the ways to promote continual growth have already been mentioned, such as a better understanding of what it means to be fully Christian – Group Reunion, Ultreya, and School of Leaders. Another one is the Secretariat – a place of responsibility and service for all aspects of the Movement. Regional and National activities also provide opportunity for growth. If people on the Secretariat stay in the same positions or simply change positions it will be seen as a clique, and others can and will lose heart in the movement, finding that their talents are not being utilized.

We should be honest enough to admit that there is a serious shortage of knowledgeable and committed leaders, who are eager to join the Leader's School or to serve on the Diocesan Secretariats. We should confidently face this challenge and prayerfully work for the changes.

Jesus had a great succession plan, when He commanded his followers in Matt 28:19, "Go and make disciples of all the nations." They were encouraged to go and spread the Good News and get others to spread the message. By our Baptism, we are called to do the same. Cursillo encourages us to share the Good News that God loves us by making a friend, being a friend and bringing our friend to Christ. All of us are called to embrace our Fourth Day, however some are called to be Cursillo leaders. Through prayer we discern what God wants us to be. Just think about it - Jesus called some ordinary fishermen to follow him and be his disciples. These ordinary men did extraordinary things in the name of Jesus, with the support of the Holy Spirit. Who will you identify and call on in your diocese for a leadership role in Cursillo? Could it be you or you or you?

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Let's remember the following: A leader is one who is grateful for the love and friendship with Christ and should act according to the method to make friends and to lead them to Christ. The School of Leaders is a group of friends believing in the purpose and method so that Christ can be shared with many people.

References:

Succession Planning Cursillo Diocese of Central Newfoundland – Excerpts from talk presented by Cecelia Hamilton Aug 2018.

CACS guidelines

- Servant Community And Leader's School