

# We, the laity, can and *must* proclaim the Good News!

*says Caroline Rother*

The fact that God works in mysterious ways is a well-known fact; no surprise then if I say that my own introduction to the Cursillo movement fits that bill rather well. I was at something of a watershed moment in my life, having come through a very difficult experience where God appeared either to be absent, or, I mused, was having a big laugh at my expense! Of course neither was true and it was Cursillo and the people who are associated with it that helped me to recognise both the hand of God in my recent life but who literally *were* His helping hand to pull me up and give me the purpose and focus that I needed.

I was invited to attend a Weekend by two very dear people, and I shall always be grateful to them, for what I experienced on that Cursillo is so very hard to put into words. God restored my faith in human nature; I met new friends and it goes without saying that with Fr Jimmy Collins, the spiritual experience was amazing. Every bit as important though, as these deep spiritual moments, was the camaraderie that developed amongst the participants which added up to a weekend I could never have contemplated.

However, perhaps the most concrete result of my first Cursillo experience was my firm conviction of how important it is to empower the laity to sit up and begin actively to spread the good news of God's truly amazing, unconditional love. Cursillo helped me to make a real commitment to this 'evangelisation' so that real inclusive community may be built up and we may all bloom wherever we are planted.

Working in a prison chaplaincy brings home to me just how much that message of the healing power of the Lord and his boundless love needs to be proclaimed. This is a huge responsibility in many ways but one that, thanks to Cursillo and the back-up that follows every Cursillo, I am able to share and have my small group pray with me and for me that the Holy Spirit will bring fruit out of any small seeds that I am able to sow.

The small group that I joined after the Cursillo Weekend is a real pillar of support. We are all very different people, working in different areas in our professional lives but drawn together by our desire for the Holy Spirit to deepen not only our faith but the zeal and courage to go tell it on the mountains!

A year after that first Cursillo, I was blessed to partake in another one, this time as part of a wonderful team. Different but equally inspiring, fun and meaningful, it was another great experience. Cursillo has totally convinced me that together with our pastors, we as laity can, must and will make a difference for now, as St Paul says, "*I should be punished if I did not preach the Gospel... it is a responsibility that has been put into my hands*". What a challenge – truly scary – but wow, what a blessing too.

