

# Face to face with love

## *Nial describes a spiritual journey*

I'm an Irish born cradle Catholic in my 60s and I'd like to share with you my experience of a 3-Day Cursillo.

I had worked as a nurse in mental handicap for nearly 30 years before being made redundant in 1988. I became a taxi driver and now work as a sole operator running my own private hire business.

My wife Janet owns a floristry business for which I do most of the deliveries. We have two sons and a lovely grand-daughter, and we live in Suffolk in the village of Freckenham near Newmarket and Mildenhall. I am a Parish Councillor of some 16 years standing

I became aware of Cursillo through some leaflets displayed at our local church of St. John the Evangelist in Mildenhall. And I had heard our deacon, the Rev Chris Christopher, and Sue Aldous, a leading parishioner, speak of this Cursillo business with great enthusiasm. So one day when working with Chris on preparing a frame to receive an icon of St. John, I asked him to tell more. As a result I found myself travelling to Boars Hill in Oxford with Chris and Sue on the Friday evening with a sense of heightened anticipation, not knowing what to expect and not getting a lot of help from either of them! I had made retreats many years ago and imagined Cursillo would be something like that. But a 3-Day Cursillo is more like a baptism!

No-one can tell you how you will feel when you come face to face with so much love as you do on a 3-Day Cursillo. I am a very ordinary person who has lived his adult Catholic life obeying the rules mostly, but generally being fairly unremarkable in making a significant contribution to the life of the parish. In listening to the talks and meditations and taking part in the Daily Prayer of the Church I became aware of an awakening in me of something for which I had yearned for years but could not put a name to. I could feel God's love wash through and over me. When on Saturday we found in our rooms all those palancas (messages of support) I was absolutely overcome that so many people the world over were praying and thinking of me. I don't mind admitting, I cried.

How has it changed me? The Weekend has helped me to focus on my prayer life and is drawing me closer to God. It has allowed me to take stock of where my priorities lie and is giving me an opportunity to grow in love of those closest to me, helping to see Christ in others and to be more tolerant and patient.

On the Cursillo enrolment form I had stated that I wanted to become more deeply spiritual - I feel that journey is starting. Cursillo will continue to help me through the groupings and Ultreyas (reunions). I never thought I would see the day when I would feel able to talk about difficulties in praying to anyone other than a priest but I have, and furthermore, I feel better for it.

And everyday and in every way I think of the slogan "Bloom where you are planted".