

Rainbow Connection

Anglican Cursillo Tasmania

August 2026

A Reflection from Diocesan Spiritual Advisor Lee Weissel Wrestling with God and Walking in Grace: Genesis 32:22-31

In our Cursillo journey—as we move through our Fourth Day—we frequently speak of piety, study, and action. Yet, beneath our active Christian commitment lies a quieter, deeper reality: the ongoing transformation of our inner selves before God. The account of Jacob at the river Jabbok in Genesis 32:22-31 offers a profound vision of what it truly means to encounter the living God, to be stripped of our self-reliance, and to receive a grace that both wounds and heals.

1. **Solitude Sparks Transformation:** Before Jacob meets God in the dark, he sends away his family, servants, and possessions in waves—a calculated attempt to manage his anxiety and protect himself from his brother Esau. His default strategy was to place people and gifts between himself and his fears. In the Hebrew context, the phrase "and Jacob was left, he alone" uses the verb *yathar*, meaning to be left over as a remnant. Stripped of every human prop, strategy, and distraction, Jacob is reduced down to nothing but himself and the dark.

How often do we fill our lives with noise, busyness, or church activities to avoid being alone with our unresolved fears? Transformation does not begin when we have everything managed; it begins when our human strategies run out and we allow ourselves to stand vulnerable and alone before God. Solitude is not the absence of God; it is the doorway into His presence.

2. **Struggle Precedes Blessing:** As Jacob stands alone, a figure wrestles with him until daybreak. This is not a distant, abstract theological debate; it is close, physical, hand-to-hand combat in the riverbank dust. When Jacob's hip is wrenched, he does not let go. Instead, he cries out: "I will not let you go unless you bless me". In God's economy, the wound and the blessing often arrive from the same hand in the same hour. Jacob is not asking to win an argument; he is asking to be endowed with divine favor for the path ahead.

Christ at the Centre: This nighttime struggle points directly to the Gospel. Centuries after Jacob, Jesus experienced His own dark struggle—not by a river, but in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross. Through His wounds, eternal blessing flows to us. Faithful prayer often looks like holding on to God in the middle of our pain, trusting that He is at work, even when we hurt.

3. **Struggle Redefines Identity:** When the stranger asks "What is your name?", Jacob must speak his truth: *Jacob*—the deceiver, supplanter, and heel-grabber. God meets this honest confession with a radical gift: a new name. He becomes *Israel* ("he strives with God" / "God strives"), naming the place *Peniel* ("the face of God") because his life was spared. Verse 31 notes that as the sun rose, Jacob passed Peniel, "limping because of his hip". His wound was permanent, but so was his new identity. He walked forward into the daylight carrying both.

Through Christ's ultimate victory on the cross, we too are given a new identity as children of God (Galatians 4:6-7). Whatever wounds, failures, or limp we carry from our past, they do not disqualify us from God's blessing; rather, they become testimonies of His grace.

The Reflection Continues....

A Prayer

Lord God,
meet us in the quiet places where our human cleverness runs out.
Grant us the grace to hold fast to you through every night of struggle.
Teach us to embrace both our limps and the new name you have given us
in Jesus Christ,
so that we may walk forward
as your blessed and transformed pilgrims. Amen.

De Colores

Thank you from former Diocesan Lay Director, Ruth Thomas

A big thank you to the 4th Day Community for your loving support since I was commissioned in October 2020. I particularly appreciated your prayers during my treatment for breast cancer. The check-ups and blood tests continue to show I am cancer free. Praise the Lord. My prayers are with many of you who are facing daily challenges and constant health issues. May you be strengthened by the loving presence of our Lord.

Alice Cordwell was commissioned by Bishop Richard into the role on 4th July 2026 at the inspiring and spirit filled Ultreya. Alice brings compassion, knowledge and commitment to the role. I know you will support Alice in the coming years.

I look forward to seeing you at our Gatherings/Ultreyas, which I will continue to organise. The next one is on Saturday 12th September at St Aidan's Launceston with Mark Cox as the Witness Speaker. It is open to everyone and so bring along your friends, especially those who may be interested in attending a Cursillo Weekend in the future.

De Colores and Ultreya!

DATES TO REMEMBER - 2026

Sat 12th Sept- Ultreya at St Aidan's Launceston, Speaker - Mark Cox

Fri 16th Oct - Sun 18th Oct - National Secretariat meeting, Queensland

Sat 24th Oct - Bishop's Training Event: Launceston

Sat 31st Oct- Bishop's Training Event: Hobart



A Message from our new DLD, Alice Cordwell

Wow ! What a year this is turning out to be for me. Well, the very start to the year of 2026 was non existent. I actually never had a 1st January. Some of you would know that I have a son who lives in Massachusetts, USA, with his children, and last year my daughter was living in Louisiana, with her daughter, for a few months. So, it made sense that I would go there for Christmas, and for the first time in 15 years, I was with my children and grandchildren under the same roof, and, bonus, it was a white Christmas as well. I left the USA on 31st December and you were already celebrating the start of the New Year here, so needless to say, it was all over, and 2026 had begun by the time I got home.

I had been going through a bit of a desert in my spiritual life for a long time, and it was weighing heavily on my heart. Like everyone, I'm not getting any younger and the years have slipped by. Where I once was an active member of my church, for lots of reasons, I wasn't anymore. I went every Sunday when I was home, but I didn't really participate in my church family, just came to be fed from the word, and then off home. I'd go. Where I once had been an active Cursillista, I wasn't any more... THE DESERT WAS REALThe Holy Spirit kept calling me in a quiet whisper. I was trying to find my way out of the desert, but, like a learner in a manual car, my foot kept slipping on the clutch, I was getting no where fast. Then, this year, with the help of the Holy Spirit, my resolve started to strengthen, I stepped out of my comfort zone at church to once again start being an active member of the family. I had to move forward; I felt it deep in my soul. Obviously, I had taken too long to get to this point with Cursillo, and God was there waiting for me to catch up.

In the first quarter of this year, I felt a strong yearning to touch base with my Cursillo family. I thought maybe I'd go to the Mananita or Clausaura, but I hadn't written the date in my diary and I missed them. So, I definitely had to go to the Welcome Day !! The day came, and when I woke up, I considered all the things I could be doing at home, but I felt a strong prompting from the Holy Spirit that I needed to go and join with others to show our new Cursillistas that they mattered, and that we would be a community of support for their 4th day and each others 4th day. I was a little saddened at the numbers that were there, but that's a subject for another day. God had his plans for me, and after some fairly energetic wrestling and arguing with the Lord, here I am, the new DLD. The next exciting episode of this adventure with God, myself, and all of you, will come soon.

But, until then, I have some packing to do. A minimal amount of clothes and lots of Allen's lollies (candy), Cadbury chocolate, and maybe some Keen's curry and Holbrooks Worcestershire sauce. I'm off to see the family in the USA for my annual time with them. The children are growing up, and with some sadness, I recognise that special time with them is becoming scarce and soon they will have all grown their adult wings and this Grandma may not see very much of them. Thankfully my daughter has come home and they are actually living with me at present, which means that my other love, my mini schnauzer, Ruby, will be staying home with her extended human family while her mum flies off to the other side of the world.

And you my friends, will be left in the capable hands of my 2IC, the one who preceded me (and joined forces with God to help me to see the role He wanted me to take on) Ruth. I will be back in October and ready to go where God leads me, and us.

Ultreya and De Colores



Report on the Ultreya at St James New Town by Shirley Tongue

“Who holds our faith when fears arise? Who stands above the stormy trial?” * Christ Alone!

What a powerful testimony we had at the Ultreya on July 4th that no matter the trials we face, whether individually or corporately, Jesus is able to deal with them and to carry us through. The theme for the day was “Christ is our hope”, a statement of faith that was threaded through the chosen hymns, the Bible reading (2 Corinthians 1:3-11) and very personally affirmed through Bishop Richard’s Witness Talk. As a Diocese we are facing difficult times, but Bishop Richard reminded us that we can rely on Jesus who is powerful while we are powerless; that God is good and that He comforts us so that we can comfort others.



***Christ Our Hope in Life and Death by Keith & Kristyn Getty, Matt Papa**

Verse1

What is our hope in life and death?
Christ alone, Christ alone
What is our only confidence?
That our souls to Him belong

Who holds our days within His hand?
What comes, apart from His command
And what will keep us to the end?
The love of Christ in which we stand

Verse2

What truth can calm the troubled soul?
God is good, God is good
Where is His grace and goodness known?
In our great Redeemer's blood

Who holds our faith when fears arise?
Who stands above the stormy trial?
Who sends the waves that bring us nigh
Unto the shore? The rock of Christ

Key verses from Bishop Richard’s bible reading from 2 Corinthians 1:3-11

³ Praise be to the the God of all comfort.

⁴ He comforts us every time we have trouble, so that we can comfort others when they have trouble. We can comfort them with the same comfort that God gives us.

⁸ Brothers, we want you to know about the trouble we suffered... We had great burdens there that were greater than our own strength. We even gave up hope for life.

⁹ ... But this happened so that we would not trust in ourselves. It happened so that we would trust in God, who raises people from death.

Ultreya Report Continued...

Once again St James, New Town hosted the Ultreya where about 50 of us gathered in person and online. We began with morning tea before the morning programme which included the Witness Talk and Holy Communion.

Bishop Richard decommissioned Ruth Thomas as Diocesan Lay Director and commissioned Alice Cordwell as her replacement. He also commissioned Ruth as the Post-Cursillo Coordinator.



After fellowship over a bring and share lunch, we broke into floating Group Reunions, then into pairs to get to know one another better over discussion of 'Strength Cards', aids in identifying our spiritual strengths. The programme ended about 2:45pm. A donation of \$65 was kindly given in the Rainbow Box and was given to St James' as a contribution to the heating.

Many commented upon the atmosphere of the gathering and our awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence. We were also aware of the strength of Cursillo as a safe space where we can be vulnerable without fear of censure or gossip. May we each be a 'safe space' in our parishes and communities, bringing hope and comfort to those around.





Everyone is Invited to

a Diocesan Cursillo Gathering (Ultreya)

Speaker: Mark Cox

Theme: Faith over fear - trusting God with our children

Date: Saturday 12th September 2026

Time: 10am (10:30 start) - 3pm

Bring: 'Finger' food to share for lunch.
Tea and Coffee provided

Where: St Aidan's, 21 Arthur St, LAUNCESTON

Bring your friends and come along
for a day of fellowship and sharing.

DE COLORES!