

Personal notes on the OMCC meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, with Cursillo African Leaders, held 17-19 March 2026

As well as members of the OMCC, the represented countries were:

- BENIN, Robertine Saho Medesse Ayalba Syldia
- GHANA, Joshua Ali (on WhatsApp as 'Anamsibadek')
- GHANA, Fr Isaac Amos Abanyie, GHANA, was to join us, but while on his way, he collapsed and later passed away
- LOSOTHO, Fr Felix Molumeli (on WhatsApp as '-Bungani Molumeli')
- UGANDA, Bruno Ojangole, who connected via ZOOM as his visa to South Africa was not actioned in time
- SOUTH AFRICA, Karon Willson, from Johannesburg
- SOUTH AFRICA, Rob Paul, from Durban
- TOGO, Robert Kpto Ayao (on WhatsApp as 'Celui Qui A Dieu Tout...')

The event surrounding Fr Isaac had us all praying for a miracle, despite his lying in a coma for a time and being diagnosed as brain-dead. The miracle that was granted was the Archbishop of Cape Coast's promise to honour Fr Isaac's legacy by ensuring that Cursillo flourishes and grows in Ghana. "In a moment of deep spiritual encouragement, the Archbishop reminded us of the sacred promise: 'Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.' (Jn 12:24)"

In groups, we held a Group Reunion. We then reassembled and introduced ourselves, each sharing Cursillo experiences from our respective geographical areas.

Many of the experiences we heard about were similar to those I have heard elsewhere: difficulties with involvement in the Fourth Day, a lack of facilities for hosting weekends, affordability issues, and people unable to take a day off work to attend a 3-day weekend. Poverty is also a significant issue, yet there's a great need to take Cursillo into shanty settlements as well. As Cursillo is still in its embryonic stage, it often has too few people to group with after a weekend. Language is sometimes a barrier. For example, South Africa has 12 official languages, and Lesotho has five.

That Cursillo is in Africa is largely due to the efforts of Francis Napoli, a Cursillista from Portugal, and the generous support of Cursillistas and the Cursillo Movement from Liverpool, French-speaking Canada, and France. Alvaro mentioned that Portuguese Cursillistas had brought Cursillo to Mozambique and Angola, while Spain had reached into Equatorial Guinea, but we have now lost contact with these countries.

In total, Africa has 54 fully recognised sovereign states recognised by the United Nations. The magnitude of the task of bringing Cursillo to Africa is enormous.

I mentioned that when a Cursillo family photo is taken, one International Group is missing. We would like Africa to be an International Group alongside the other four existing IGs.

Overall, my impression was that Cursillo was germinating in some countries, but its growth was stunted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The importance of FI3ed was discussed as a point of discernment, not as a recipe book. We don't have a recipe book. It was noted that the title of FI3ed refers to 'ideas', not 'commandments'.

The next day, Wednesday 18 March, we continued praying for Fr Isaac and referred to Mon Sebastian Gaya for a miraculous recovery.

Again, we held a Group Reunion. It was a wonderful way to deepen our friendship.

After morning tea, we held a Conversation in the Spirit exercise for the rest of the day to discern how we might move Cursillo forward in Africa, what we need, and what we need to consider. We learned of the wide range of needs for Africa. At the third round of Conversation in the Spirit, two lists of action items were produced. These were distilled into the following:

- Identify a working team. Its primary purpose is to build structures. In practice, this means creating local groups of leaders, each with a single coordinator, and linking them across Africa to work together until they evolve into School of Leaders and Diocesan Secretariats, with the approval of their local bishops.
- Establish a 'training' programme covering (a) the 'formative' level, i.e., the basics of Cursillo and its Charism; (b) pre-Cursillo, Cursillo, and Post-Cursillo; and (c) an understanding of the Cursillo structures (Diocesan and National Secretariats, etc.).
- Insertion/connection into the Church
- Creation of a Spiritual Network.
- Establish friendships and personal connections to learn from one another and to love one another. This may be through regular contact via Zoom or local meetings.
- Along with a training plan, a mission plan is also needed: for example, 'we need Cursillo to get leaders.' The long-term plan may include increasing Cursillo's visibility to help bishops become aware of and approve it. It may also outline how to reach people (candidates) and how to encourage people to pray together. When planning, it is important to keep in mind that whenever Pre-Cursillo is planned, Post-Cursillo should also be planned. A financial plan needs to be part of any planning activity.

Alvaro presented the concept of 'Ubuntu'. It is a Swahili word that conveys the idea that 'I am because we are', or that 'we all eat from the same pot.' In other words, we need to work and cooperate together. The strength of our unity will determine our ability to succeed. The potential of twinning countries was raised to build on the support previously given by other countries that first brought Cursillo to Africa.

The next morning, Thursday, 19 March, the preparation of a plan was further discussed (this is to be done by 'Africa'; it has to be their plan, with support from the OMCC).

Key elements of the discussion included:

- 'Simunye', a Zulu word, was used. It means 'we are one': one family, one group, one country. We are together; together, we express unity, solidarity, and collective strength – values at the heart of all we do.
- 'In omnibus respice finem' is a Latin phrase meaning 'In all things, look to the end.' It advises us to consider the goal, the end result, and the long-term consequences of our actions. It urges foresight, wise action, reflection on our intended actions, and keeping our spiritual end in mind. (Section 136 of FI3ed refers.)
- The OMCC decided to pray for the Cursillo Movement in Africa on the first Friday of each month. Karon prepared a prayer for this purpose, which is attached to this note.

The tasks ahead loom large, yet we were reminded that God doesn't call the qualified; He qualifies those He calls.

Mons. Jose Angel Saiz Meneses, our Movement's Spiritual Advisor, joined us via Zoom from Seville, Spain. He was highly supportive of our work for the Movement in Africa and wished he could have been with us. He said, 'There's no movement that transmits the first announcement of the Gospel as Cursillo does.'

Alfred