

Dear Cursillista,

You have been chosen to give a Rollo during the Via de Cristo weekend. God has given you a great responsibility and He will give you're the wisdom, strength and endurance to fulfill the task. In addition, the Via de Cristo method provides two special people; an "angel" from the Palanca Team and an "angel" from the Kitchen Team, who will help you through the weekend.

You will be receiving a Rollista Request Sheet from your Palanca Angel. It is very important for you to fill this out and return it to your Palanca Angel as soon as possible. Your angel will use this sheet to plan your send off on the weekend. During the weekend, it is your responsibility to be in the Palanca Chapel 20 minutes before the time scheduled for your Rollo. If you are a table leader, you may need the help of an Assistant Rector to let you know what time to leave the weekenders so you will be ready on time.

Every sendoff is unique, because you are unique. In addition, there are events happening on the weekend that may add to its uniqueness. For instance, when two Rollo's are given back to back, your send off may be too short to read all of the scriptures you have chosen or to sing all of the songs as requested. Because the weekenders are always the first priority, you may need to be flexible and understanding if all of your expectations are not met. The most important part of the sendoff for each Rollista is prayer!

When your Rollo is over, return to the Palanca Chapel. After a short prayer of thanksgiving, your Kitchen Angel will have a special plate of food prepared for you. Your Kitchen Angel would like you to request something special on your "Rollista Request Sheet", but keep in mind that your request should not be overly extravagant nor excessively time consuming to prepare.

Now, to prepare for your Rollo, thoroughly read your entire Rollo outline and support material as supplied.

GLYASDW,

Utah Via de Cristo Community

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING A TALK AND USING THE TALK OUTLINES

I. GENERAL COMMENTS

You received a call to be on a team, asked for discernment, and concluded that the Lord was calling you to serve at this time. There is a reason God wanted you on this particular team in the role you have been assigned. Serve Him with prayerful anticipation.

You were asked to give a talk. You may be eager to do so and/or very uncertain about it. Whether or not you feel capable of giving a talk is not relevant at this point. Many people before you have had those same feelings, probably even someone who gave a talk at the weekend you attended. In the Leaders talk, we are reminded that we are all leaders. We just need to rely on God to guide us and to develop the qualities in us that are necessary for the task. It is the same for giving a talk. For many people, this is a growing experience and they must trust God to work through them. What is more important than feeling capable of giving a talk is that you are living the Via de Cristo method. Are you growing in your relationship with God? Are you reaching out to others with God's love? Do you have the support of a Group Reunion and an Ultreya? Are you living the life that you will be presenting in your talk?

Once you have said "yes" to writing a talk, pray for wisdom and guidance. Read all of the material for your talk and be familiar with the progression of the weekend before you begin. The progression of the weekend has been carefully planned, even if we were unaware of this on our own weekend. The talks on the weekend are not simply fifteen talks, but fifteen sections of one talk. Think of your talk as a chapter in a book. Each talk, like the chapter of a book, says the things that must be presented at that time. There is a natural progression. The author has carefully thought through the presentation of the material or the plot of the story. The whole would not make sense if one chapter was omitted or strayed from the purpose of the book. In the same way, if you go off on your own tangent, give inappropriate examples, give a stirring witness too early in the weekend or omit things that are important to the progression of the weekend, your talk will not fit into the overall plan of the weekend. Make every point in the outline and add none of your own. Your choice of words and your personal examples and/or witness will make your talk unique.

Another way to think of the talks is to imagine building a tower of blocks. Each block must be firm and whole to build a solid foundation. If a talk does not include all the points, it does not give the solid foundation that the subsequent talks need to build on. It is also deficient if it presents examples or a witness that do not fit the points of the talk. Time will have been spent on unnecessary material, which weakens the talk and interferes with the progression of the weekend. A stirring witness, no matter how touching, will obscure the message of the talk if it does not clarify a point of the outline and fit into the progression of the weekend. Examples should be brief, with only enough detail to make the point.

Giving a talk on a Via de Cristo weekend takes a special kind of discipline and humility. The talks build gradually from Friday morning to Sunday afternoon. Each one is meant to do a certain job in a certain way. It is important to present the material that is unique to that talk because the remaining talks build on it. You may use your own creative writing and personal speaking style, while still making the points of your

particular talk. The talks should catch and retain the attention of the participants and fit into the purpose of the talk in the progression of the weekend. They should not sound “canned”. It is customary to write out your talk. It will keep your talk concise, avoid rambling, and stay within your time limit. Once it has been critiqued at a team meeting, your talk should not be changed without the consent of the rector/a.

If you are asked to give a talk for the second time, do not use your old talk. Each talk should be written for a particular weekend. In the time that elapsed, you have grown in your relationship with God and in your understanding of the Via de Cristo method. You may now have an example or a witness that is more current and more relevant. If it is fresh for you, the participants will respond to that.

It is important to use inclusive language. If it is a men’s or women’s weekend, use the appropriate gender pronouns in your talk. There are a few secretariats that sponsor co-ed weekends. Be sensitive to use of gender if you are giving a talk on one of these weekends. It is also important to be aware that there are participants who are married, single, divorced or widowed. Differences in national origin, race and age should also be considered when choosing examples and witnesses.

Each talk, in its own way, should do two things. First, it explains a part of the picture or method. Second, it urges and/or inspires the participants to do what is presented and shows that it is possible. Each talk does this in its own way. Be sensitive to the progression of the weekend. The opening talks explain Christianity more generally and the participants are encouraged to develop and deepen a relationship with God. The final talks lay out a concrete method of sharing our faith in the world. Each one progresses, with definite steps, to inspire the participants into action. The later talks are to be given with more enthusiasm, including examples of how the Via de Cristo method of renewal has worked in their own lives.

There is also a development of several minor topics. These ideas do not have a talk assigned to them, but are developed gradually in several talks. For instance, lay-clergy relations are discussed in three talks: Layperson as Church in the World, Means of Grace (or Days in the Life or Sacraments) and Developing Christian Community Within Our Environments, each time in a different way. Spiritual direction is mentioned in several talks. The same is true of prayer, family life and the Church.

By making the Christian ideal seem attractive and attainable, the talks should evoke a desire in the participants to respond to God’s love by developing or deepening their relationship with Him and by instilling in them a desire to share God’s love with others. To do this they need the support of the Christian community. As the talks unfold, the participants will gradually see a vision develop and will stay interested until the end of the last day.

It is good to be aware of the different responses possible during the weekend. For introverts the silent retreat may be welcome and allow them to go within. For others, it is frustrating to be with all these people and not be able to talk to them; they are more comfortable if they can talk with and connect to other people. Later in the weekend, the extraverts will be energized and the introverts may feel overwhelmed with too much togetherness and little or no time to process what they are hearing.

II. PROGRESSION OF THE WEEKEND

THURSDAY

The first meditation Thursday night suggests that the participant “Know Yourself”. The second meditation, “The Prodigal Son”, reminds us that we, like the prodigal son, have often strayed away from our heavenly Father. God joyfully welcomes us home when we stray from Him, just as the father welcomed his son. When he was a long way off, his father ran to him joyfully. In the same way, our Father is waiting for us to come to Him. The spiritual retreat follows. It prepares the participants for the weekend by making them more aware of Christ’s presence and by emphasizing the need to come to Him.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE VIA DE CRISTO WEEKEND

On Friday the intention is to bring the participants face to face with themselves. They grapple with the question, “Who am I?” The speakers present a new set of values and ideas about life, higher and more spiritual values than they may have had before. The purpose of the morning meditation, “The Three Glances of Christ”, is to make the participants aware of the need to respond to God. They are given examples from the gospels of three persons on whom Christ directed His gaze. Each person will react differently, asking him/herself the question, “How will I respond?”

The five talks on the first day clearly present the ideal of living the life of grace. The following are the important points of each talk:

IDEAL (The Call to be Fully Human)

- Humans are the crown of creation because they have intellect, freedom and will.
- The balance between the intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of a person is a measure of human maturity.
- Self-giving is the measure of a person’s human development.
- An authentic ideal gives purpose and meaning to life.
- You can discover your ideal by examining what you think about and how you spend your extra time and money.

GRACE (HABITUAL GRACE)

- God’s supreme ideal is that all of His children live in His grace and love.
- We are invited to a new relationship with God because of God’s habitual grace.
- We can respond to God’s invitation.
- Grace, a natural attribute of God, calls us to be part of the family of God.
- We are members of the family of our Father, living as brothers and sisters, with Christ as our brother.
- Grace is not based on our worthiness, but solely on God’s divine nature.

THE LAYPERSON AS THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

- Christ did not intend merely to save individuals but to save the world. For this reason He founded the Church to continue His mission to the world.
- As members of the Church, the laity have a specific mission to the world and in the world to be fully Christian.
- Because responding to God’s love changes our lives, we are called to penetrate

and transform society through the power of the Gospel.

ACTUAL GRACE

- Humans feel inadequate to participate in God’s mission, but God has not left us alone.
- God offers us His grace and enables us to accept it and grow in faith.
- The Holy Spirit lives and works in us, enlightening our mind and inspiring our will.
- As the body of Christ, we are in this together.
- Palanca is the spiritual “lever” of prayer and sacrifice on the weekend and in our ministry.

At this point general palanca is introduced and the low-key approach ends.

PIETY

- Piety arises out of our relationship with God.
- There are many types of false piety.
- Authentic piety is directing our whole life to God.
- We need to nourish our relationship with God through practices of authentic piety.
- Piety is a life-long process.

THE SECOND DAY OF THE VIA DE CRISTO WEEKEND

By the beginning of the second day, the participants begin to ask themselves: How can I attain this ideal of a conscious and growing life in Christ and how can I become an authentic, dynamic Christian? The talks on this day are geared to answer these questions by presenting a Christ-oriented sacramental piety that makes us more fully aware of being the people of God, the body of Christ. The participants are introduced to prayer as a personal conversation with their brother Jesus. They begin to feel a concern for their brothers and sisters in Christ. The second day begins with the meditation, “The Figure of Christ.” The emphasis is on the humanity of Christ, the Christ who is living today, the Person who attracts so many to Him. The participants are invited into a personal, intimate friendship with Jesus.

STUDY

- Christian study is not the same as the study of Christianity.
- The principle source of study is the Bible.
- Everyone studies throughout life.
- There are obstacles to study.
- There are remedies to overcome these obstacles.

MEANS OF GRACE (A DAY IN THE LIFE, OR CHANNELS OF GRACE)

- We encounter Christ throughout life. He personally touches us.
- This enables us to lead fully Christian lives, sharing God’s grace with others.
- Sacraments as means of grace.
- Baptism

- Holy Communion (Eucharist)
- Other events in our lives become grace-filled days in the life of a Christian.

APOSTOLIC ACTION

- Apostolic action naturally follows piety and study.
- Apostolic action is anything we do with the sole purpose of sharing Christ with others and desiring that they have a relationship with Him.
- Apostolic action is non-manipulative.
- Apostolic action's purpose is to infuse Christ's ideal into the world.
- Friendship is the key to sharing Christ with others.

OBSTACLES TO GRACE

- Sin is a reality, a failure to live as we should.
- Obstacles are sin, Satan, the world and our own flesh.
- Obstacles in the attitudes of our hearts and minds frustrate our growth in grace.
- There are influences in our society that encourage us to sin.
- Obstacles are tests of our love and reminders to love God and others more.
- Prayer, spiritual direction and Christian friendship are among the remedies for overcoming these obstacles.

LEADERS

- Each person is a leader in his/her personal environments.
- Natural and supernatural qualities of leaders can be developed through enhancing loving characteristics.
- Transforming the world depends on each individual Christian.
- Each individual is responsible to offer all of his/her individual talents in service to God in his/her natural environments.
- The group is more than the sum of its individual members when influencing an environment for God.

THE THIRD DAY OF THE VIA DE CRISTO WEEKEND

By the beginning of the third day, most of the participants are beginning to feel renewed, committed, and filled with enthusiasm. On the first day they encountered themselves. On the second day they entered into intimate friendship with Christ. Today their thoughts are projected out into the world. They are told how they can share Christ with others in the world in which they live. The third day is a call to apostolic action. The day begins with the meditation, "Christ's Message to the Participant." The participants hear that Christ is counting on them: "I have chosen you and have appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit."

THE STUDY AND EVANGELIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

- Christianity is lived in community.
- We need to study our environments in order to change them.
- God gives us what we need to evangelize our environments--to make them more

Christ-like.

- This is accomplished by working with others who share our mission.

LIFE IN GRACE (CHRISTIAN LIFE)

- The practices of piety provide a practical program for spiritual growth.
- The Piety section of the reunion card is explained, including spiritual direction and the importance of prayer.
- Our practices of piety will change and deepen as we grow spiritually.

DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WITHIN OUR ENVIRONMENTS

- Our mission is to transform our environments into living Christian communities.
- We are to form Christian communities in our environments.
- The purpose of Christian community is the evangelization of the world.
- God gives the community what it needs to accomplish this goal.

GROUP REUNION AND ULTREYA

- The principal problem in living the Christian life is perseverance.
- In order to persevere, one must be in community with others who are also striving to live the life of Christ - a balanced life of piety, study and apostolic action.
- Group reunion is the deep relationship of a few close friends - friendship and accountability raised to the level of the divine.
- Ultreya, the reunion of groups, includes a broader spectrum of the Christian community to support our mission.
- Without Ultreya it is harder for a group reunion to reach its purpose of sharing Christ with the world.

FOURTH DAY

- We each have a responsibility to carry out the mission entrusted to us.
- It is not easy, but the Via de Cristo method helps us persevere.
- Christ is the cornerstone and source of our ability to persevere.
- Each person's call to apostolic action is unique.
- Life is living the Via de Cristo.

III. PROGRESSION OF EXAMPLES AND WITNESS IN THE TALKS.

This is an overview of how to use examples and witness in the talks. A more in-depth discussion is included in the specific talk outlines under the heading "Suggestions for Writing This Talk."

THURSDAY

Thursday evening the participants are usually nervous and uncertain. They know no one or just a few people in the group that has gathered. Although the team tries to make them feel at ease, the unknown brings with it a certain amount of anxiety even for the most confident participants. The team, on the other hand, is excited and eager. Being

sensitive to the participants and their feelings of anxiety are important. Keep the progression of the weekend in mind.

FRIDAY

The first day presents the life in grace as the fundamental ideal of Christian life. The most common mistake is saying too much. The talks are low-key and do not use the actual experiences of the speaker in the same way that later talks do. The talks should be clear, natural and presented with conviction. The participants are told clearly what a great thing s/he is called to do and urged to do it. The use of illustrations and examples is carefully controlled.

IDEAL

The first talk is difficult to prepare, and for this reason it should be assigned to an experienced team member. It is very matter-of-fact in presenting the material. There is no prayer, no mention of God or any use of scripture, no matter how tempting it is to slip it in. The first three meditations, two on Thursday evening and one Friday morning, have challenged the participants to look at their relationship with God. Without saying it directly in the talk, many participants will already be thinking that a life with God should be his/her ideal. All examples should be short, to the point and not religious in nature. It is essential that this talk remains secular and does not deviate from its purpose.

ACTUAL GRACE

Given by clergy, this talk presents the life in grace as the Christian ideal. It, and all the talks that follow, begin with prayer. The use of scripture is introduced.

LAYPERSON AS CHURCH IN THE WORLD

This talk remains low-key. Examples are not stirring testimonies, but concrete examples of the Church active in the world. Scripture is used in this talk.

ACTUAL GRACE

This talk ends with the presentation of general palanca and the low-key approach ends.

PIETY

The Piety talk presents the example of a person who is living the life of grace. It includes how the speaker came to realize what directing one's life to God means and the difference this has made in his/her life. Being the first talk with a personal testimony, Piety often has a significant impact on the participants. It must be presented with conviction and enthusiasm. The participants see that it is possible to live a life dedicated to God because the speaker presents a life that has done this successfully.

SATURDAY

While echoing the message of Friday, the second day talks patiently explain how it is done--what each person must do to live the Christian ideal and become a leader for Christ. Each talk presents the participant with one part of the process. Each talk is

explanatory in nature and explains how the method works. The speaker needs to be aware of not saying too much. Examples are primarily explanatory and show how the method worked in the life of the speaker. They are not to be inspirational in the way the Sunday talks are. The focus is individual and personal.

STUDY

The Study talk is meant to explain Christian study and why it is important. The examples are explanatory in nature and illustrate the study method that has worked for the speaker in deepening his/her relationship with God and in discerning God's will for his/her life.

MEANS OF GRACE (A DAY IN THE LIFE, CHANNELS OF GRACE)

This talk is given by clergy. It discusses the sacraments--God touching us in everyday things and throughout life.

APOSTOLIC ACTION

The talk presents a method of personal evangelism and shows how it works. Apostolic action is the natural response of a Christian who has experienced God's unconditional love and wants to share it. The witness in the talk is sharing the speaker's response to God's love. S/he introduces his/her friend, Jesus, to a friend. Make a friend. Be a friend. Bring your friend to Christ.

OBSTACLES TO GRACE

Obstacles to Grace is given by clergy. It discusses some of the obstacles we face when trying to live the life of grace. It also presents remedies to these obstacles.

LEADERS

Leaders is the inspirational talk of the day and summarizes the day in a moving way, showing that what has been presented during the day works. The speaker shows what a person can do when living the method that was presented. It includes examples of the natural and supernatural qualities of a leader, a person who is putting all s/he is into being a Christian. In his/her own way, everyone is a leader in his/her environment.

SUNDAY

The third day explains further what it means to be a Christian leader, but does it on a different level. Up to this time the focus has been on the individual. This now changes to focus on the environment in which a person finds him/herself and his/her relationships with others in these environments. The talks stress how the participants must co-operate with other Christians and form Christian community with them. It fills out the vision of how the Church and the individual Christian can function in the modern world. It takes a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ and relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ to give us the support and encouragement we need. This involves the presentation of a method. Each talk presents its part of the method. The participants are given instructions on how the Via de Cristo method works. It also provides a vision of the Church as a Christian community that is accomplishing something. The talks are strong, urgent, confident and triumphant. He is risen! He has

overcome the world! He is present in His Church, still overcoming the world! Examples need to show a Christian community working together to evangelize an environment. The participants should have the feeling that there is such a community, they can fit into it, and they can also be successful in sharing Christ with their world.

THE STUDY AND EVANGELIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

This talk introduces a new concept. Our environments are those groups to which we belong. As Christian leaders we should be having an impact on those environments in order that they become more Christ-like. Eduardo Bonnin, the founder of Cursillo®, thought that this talk presented a concept that most participants had not heard before. The first talk of each day, including this one, is explanatory in nature. It must be clear, systematic, specific and concrete, laying out a method. It presents specific examples of things to think about when planning to influence an environment for Christ and working with individuals in that environment. It gives practical methods that produce positive results.

LIFE IN GRACE (CHRISTIAN LIFE)

This is the final clergy talk. (In some movements it is given by a layperson.) It presents spiritual direction as one method of persevering in the Christian ideal and discusses the Piety section of the reunion card.

DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WITHIN OUR ENVIRONMENTS

The remaking of society can only be accomplished through the building of self-giving Christian communities developed within our environments. The appropriate witness in this talk is the example of an environment being transformed by a group—a practical example and living story of Christians working together to change the spirit of an environment to be more Christ-like. It is to be joyful and inspirational, leading the participants to believe that they can do this too.

GROUP REUNION AND ULTREYA

This talk introduces the Via de Cristo method of persevering. It is the living example of a person who is part of a Group Reunion that supports the deepening of his/her faith and encourages him/her to share Christ with others in order to transform his/her environments. S/he also witnesses to the support of the greater Christian community through Ultreya. “This method works!” is the message of the talk. It is not possible, at best very difficult, to persevere alone. We need the support of our relationship with Christ and our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ to persevere. The witness in the talk shows how this worked in the life of the speaker. As in the previous talk, the emphasis is not how the Christian community supported the speaker through a difficult time, but supported his/her reaching out to others with Jesus’ love and forming Christian community with them. It is inspirational in nature and witnesses about a method that works.

THE FOURTH DAY

This talk emphasizes what has been presented in the previous talks and is another example of someone living the Via de Cristo method by influencing those around him/her

for Christ. It also prepares the participants for some of the common problems they may face when they get home. It is a joyful example of another person who shows by example that it is possible to persevere.

IV. HOW TO USE THE OUTLINES

There are three main sections of each talk outline. The first section is divided into four topics: Orientation, General Comments, Atmosphere and Suggestions for Writing This Talk. The Outline and the Clarification of the Outline follow.

The first section is important to provide the framework of the talk. It discusses the important points of the talk, the atmosphere of the weekend at the point that this talk is given and important suggestions for writing the talk. It talks more specifically about the points in the outline, which ones should be emphasized, appropriate examples and witnesses for the talk and where they should be inserted. It is important background information the speaker needs in order to write an effective talk that fits into the progression of the weekend.

The outline presents the points that must be made in the talk. It is expected that each talk contains these points and no others. Write-downs are underlined in the outline. If a participant writes down only those things, s/he will have a good outline of what was presented on the weekend. For those movements that use overheads, this is the minimum of what should appear on the overheads. There are a few places where the outline clearly says that a specific Bible verse should be included. In some talks there are more Bible verses than can be included and stay within the time frame, or there are several Bible verses that clarify a point being made. Use of Bible verses in those instances is at the discretion of the speaker.

The Clarification of the Outline section is meant to clarify the points made in the outline point by point. It is meant primarily for the enlightenment of the speaker and fleshes out the points in the outline. It expands and explains the thought. Although the speaker may want to use some of these ideas in his/her talk, it is not possible to use all of the Clarification in your talk. Bible verses in the Clarification may be included, but do not need to be used.

It is important to read all three sections of the talk outline before beginning to write a talk. This will help you understand what is to be presented in the talk, how it fits into the progression of the weekend and the atmosphere of the weekend at this point.

Pray first, last, and always. Pray for team formation during team meetings, since building Christian community is the first priority for the meetings. Pray before you begin preparing your talk. Pray as you read the material. Pray as you sit down to write the talk. Pray after the talk is written, asking for discernment whether you have said the things that need to be said. Pray for the people who will critique the talk. Pray for the participants who will hear the talk, that each one would hear what God wants him/her to hear in the talk. There will be prayer support as you give the talk. Pray for the discussion after the talk. Pray for the weekend as a whole. In other words, bathe the weekend and your part in it in prayer. After the weekend, continue to pray for the participants as they return home. Pray for their perseverance in the Via de Cristo method.

To God be the glory!

THE LAYPERSON AS THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

Recommended Time: 30 minutes

I. Orientation

The ideal of grace is not lived in isolation but in community. This talk is a call to be living and active members of the Christian community. By grace we were incorporated into the family of God through our baptism.

God has a marvelous plan of salvation. It is not ancient history. God still acts. His plan of salvation is for us today. The Church is the body of Christ in today's world.

In the Bible the Church is described in living images. Key concepts of this talk are that the Church is the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27) and the Church is God's own people. (I Peter 2:9-10) We are conscious and responsible parts of the Church. As the body of Christ, we are the hands, feet, eyes, and ears of Jesus, intent on making others aware of God's presence in the world.

All the baptized (clergy and laity) are the Church. Together we have a unity in our mission though there is a diversity of functions. We all have responsibilities that come from our call from God in baptism.

The main points to be made in this talk are:

- Christ did not intend merely to save individuals but to save the world. For this reason He founded the Church to continue His mission to the world.
- As members of the Church, the laity have a specific mission to the world and in the world to be fully Christian.
- Because a person's life is changed, s/he is to penetrate and transform society through the power of the gospel.

II. General Comments

This talk presents the concept of laypersons as the Church in the world as the apostolic ideal. It presents the mission of the Church in the world and each person's part in that mission. It should awaken in us an enthusiasm for Christian action. This talk provides the framework for the rest of the lay talks, which develop a concrete picture of how to be a Christian leader (an apostle) in the Church (a Christian community impacting environments).

This is the third talk of the Via de Cristo weekend. The first talk, (Ideal), explained the need to have an ideal, something to live for that is adequate for our lives. The second talk, (Grace), presented the Christian ideal - the life of grace, a living relationship with God. The Layperson as the Church in the World grows out of these first two talks, and it considers how the Christian ideal can be made effective in the world. It shows the layperson how a concern for the world and its problems and a desire to share the life of grace with all people are part of the Christian ideal. The living out of this Christian ideal involves drastically changing the world.

This talk presents the vision of God's plan for the world and the necessary role of the layperson in that plan. It presents God's call to the participants and explains how living out the Christian ideal is meant to be part of our everyday experience of life. God has a place for each one of us in His scheme of building His kingdom and expects each Christian to participate and do the tasks that He gives him/her to accomplish.

The remaining lay talks of the Via de Cristo build upon this one. They outline a

program for each participant to follow in finding an effective place in the mission of the Church in the world. The later talks of Piety, Study and Apostolic Action will present a program for growing in effectiveness as a Christian apostle. Leaders sums up the Via de Cristo to that point by presenting the picture of what a lay apostle should be. The lay talks on Sunday outline an approach to apostolic action in the world. They present what we need to be effective Christians and show the need for each of us to be active Christians by reaching out to others.

The main idea of The Layperson as the Church in the World talk is the importance of lay people in the Church's mission. It is not primarily a talk on the Church or a talk on the state of our society. It is easy to get the talk off track by giving too much information about the Church or too detailed a story of the layperson's role as a Church member. The Church should be presented in its apostolic or missionary dimension so the participant can see that being an apostle is part of living as a baptized member of the Church. The role of the lay person is to have an active part in the mission of the Church. We are members of the Church and, therefore, have a God-given apostolic responsibility. This talk has a very specific function, but it does not say everything a Christian should know about either the nature of the Church or the role of the layperson.

III. Atmosphere

The atmosphere of the Via de Cristo weekend at this point is often more intellectual than heartfelt. The discussion will have picked up after the talk on Grace, but it is still an exchange of ideas. We have probably not yet reached their hearts.

Most will have begun to participate in the discussion, but some may still be holding back. The ways the members of the group interact with each other have not yet been established, i.e., who will talk and when.

The Ideal talk may have disturbed many of them, but the Grace talk probably had a calming effect by presenting God's all-encompassing love. The Layperson as the Church in the World may again disturb many participants because it points out the tremendous responsibility given each one of us through our call from God in baptism.

IV. Suggestions for Writing this Talk

This talk should be lively and vital. The key to presenting this talk is that it should not be a profound theological discourse. The participants do not need a lot of theory but need to be aware of the importance of God's call in their lives.

This talk presents a vision of God's call to them and their purpose as Christians. The speaker should show a feeling of excitement over having a unique part in building God's kingdom, a part that cannot be done by anyone else.

The speaker should avoid too much theory, complexity or theological issues. These cannot be dealt with adequately in this talk. They may have the counter-effect of preventing the participants from confronting themselves. The speaker should demonstrate the importance and excitement of our calling rather than a detailed analysis.

The first day of the weekend is very general, and the approach is not on a personal level. At this point the participants are wary of any attempt to change them, so the speaker should be careful not to tell them how to be an apostle but sketch out the attractiveness and the greatness of Christ's ideal for the world.

This is not a witness talk, but the speaker should give examples. This talk should

clearly explain two things. First, the Church was created to bring all people to Christ. Second, each person has a part in the mission of the Church as an active witness in the world. Thus, when we accept Jesus as Savior, we have an obligation to bring Christ to those around us. This is expanded in the talks that follow.

The speaker should stick to the points in the outline and develop them effectively. This talk should give witness to the importance of the way of Christ and the life of an apostle, a “sent one.” The speaker must be careful of the kinds of examples used. It is good to show in stories the need people have for Christ and the importance of our call as apostles. It is good to convey what that calling means to the speaker but not to illustrate how to be an apostle in the way that the Apostolic Action and The Study and Evangelization of the Environment talks will. The emphasis is on the call to be an apostle in the world. The speaker should avoid use of personal witness.

One of the key points is the wide scope of the calling of the laity. Many of the participants will understand their call as doing “church things” to the point of not hearing their call to be apostles to the world. This misunderstanding can be avoided if the vision of transforming the world is clearly presented and understood during this talk. The speaker may want to leave the participants with a leading question regarding the place of their call in their everyday lives.

THE LAYPERSON AS THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

The great problem of today is that people are not living as a family - God’s family.

II. GOD’S PLAN FOR THE WORLD

- A. Our society is troubled by serious problems. Give brief examples, preferably from current news events.
- B. Human solutions have failed miserably in solving these problems. Give brief examples.
- C. These problems are only symptoms. The root of the world’s troubles lies in its separation from God.
- D. God works out His plan of salvation at a personal level and at the community level.
 1. The key to happiness for each person lies in Jesus Christ. Include the reading of Philippians 3:7-9 in the talk.
 2. The radical and only solution to the problems of the world lies in Jesus Christ when people live in the manner described in the Grace Talk. Include the reading of Ephesians 1:9-10 or Colossians 1:15-20 in the talk.
- E. The ideal of grace is not lived in isolation, but in community.

III. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

- A. It is not the buildings, but something alive, the people.
- B. It is not a religious social club with membership fees, but a gathering of God’s people, visible and spiritual at the same time.
- C. It is not a social service agency dispensing its bounty. We are all seated together at the table, sharing life.

- D. It does not exist just to serve its members.
- E. It is the same Christ today as the one in history, the body of Christ alive and real. (Hebrews 13:8, I Corinthians 12:27)
- F. It is the people of God who are the light, salt, and leaven of the world. (Matthew 5:13-16)
- G. It is born of the evangelizing activity of Jesus and the disciples. It is the normal, desired, and visible fruit of this continuing activity (Acts 2:32). The Church is the reunion of those who believe that Jesus is Lord, those who hope and love through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the community of believers united in the spreading of hope, realizing the love of God and of people.
 - I am the Church.
 - You are the Church.
 - We are the Church, the body of Christ. We are all His children. We have been restored.

IV. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

- A. The mission of the Church is to evangelize the world. It was given to us by Jesus in the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20. This is the core mission of the Church and all of its members.

The Church evangelizes when its members seek, through the power of the God's word, to share Christ with others. When, by the power of the Holy Spirit, people accept Christ's invitation to come into their lives, their lives change. This affects those around them.
- B. Within this unity of mission there is a diversity of functions or ministries in the Church.
 - 1. Clergy: Pastors are ministers of the word and sacrament, teachers and enablers with the task of preparing believers for ministry to build up the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)
 - 2. Laity: Laypersons are witnesses, bringing Christ to all their environments. (I Corinthians. 4:1)

Some laypersons have leadership roles and some have special training such as lay missionaries, teachers and Associates in Ministry. We are all people of God, co-responsible for the unique mission of the Church. (I Corinthians. 12:12-14)
- C. We have been called to evangelize the world with the Christian message. This evangelizing function is not an accident or a luxury of the Christian life. This is the only true response to the call of God's grace to us.
- D. The redemptive work of Jesus extends to every aspect of life in the world. There is no other solution to the problems of the world.

V. THE SPECIFIC MISSION OF THE LAYPERSON

- A. The mission begins with our call in baptism and continues as we affirm that call. (Galatians 6:4, Matthew 22:39) It originates in the Biblical commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves.

- B. It is exercised in the world.
- C. All of life is a mission field for the people of God.
 - 1. We proclaim the good news to the world by our personal Christian walk with God and by our fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - 2. We believe the gospel and make it come alive by repenting and reforming our attitudes and lives.
 - 3. We transform the world around us by taking our own responsibility seriously to live out our faith and to be a visible witness.
 - 4. We can realize our human ideal and Christian ideal in the world and in the Church by conforming our lives to the image of Christ. This commitment extends to all areas of our lives - personal, family, professional, civic, socio-economic, political, etc.
- D. Lay persons are called to be saints and to make the world Christ-like. (Ephesians. 4:11-13)

VI. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAITY'S MISSION

- A. It is personal and unique for each person.
- B. It is a community endeavor.
- C. It is the work of grace.
- D. It is being the Church in the world.
- E. It is apostolic - We are called to BE the Church.
 - 1. We are to witness, living Christian lives regardless of the consequences that brings.
 - 2. We are to be living instruments, allowing God to work through us in every situation in which He has placed us.

VII. CONCLUSION

- A. To be a Christian living in the world is to know how to change our freedom in Christ into a springboard from which we can go about transforming the world around us to be Christ-centered in every moment and within the normal flow of life.
- B. Laypersons are called to be saints in 20__ (current year), empowered by the Spirit, courageously moving out into the groups and structures of the world.
 - 1. Taking the marvelous realities of grace seriously.
 - 2. Living fully as God's children.
 - 3. Living fully as brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - 4. Serving as temples of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 3:16)
 - 5. Showing Christ in every part of our lives.
 - 6. Judging all the problems of life from a Christ-like perspective.
 - 7. Living in grace and by means of grace, and bearing that grace in our fragile, sinful selves. (II Corinthians 4:7)
 - 8. Expressing joy for God and joy for other people. (Philippians 4:4, 10)

CLARIFICATION OF THE OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

In the Ideal talk, the participants were asked to consider what they are living for and whether it is leading them to true happiness. In the Grace talk, they were asked to consider a new ideal - God, and the new life of grace God offers, which provides the key to true happiness. This talk begins by making them look out to the whole world and its great problems. It relates what has been said so far to the whole of human life and points out that we are not living as God's family.

II. GOD'S PLAN FOR THE WORLD

- A. The ills of our society are all problems of relationships: between nations, between classes, between institutions, between individuals, or between an individual and any or all of the above. These relationships are usually based on self-interest rather than self-giving. The speaker should illustrate this briefly, perhaps with newspaper headlines.
- B. Humanity has placed its faith in technology, science and progress. It has based its happiness on its own collective efforts. These efforts have failed. Give brief examples.
- C. We have failed because society has treated only the symptoms, not the disease. The root of the world's troubles and relationship problems lies in people's separation from God. We live in a world that has turned its back on Jesus Christ.
- D. For this reason, humanity's attempts to cure these ills through collective human efforts alone are doomed to fail. For instance, one government program failed to cure poverty, so we developed program after program until we built a huge bureaucratic structure, but we have not improved the condition of the poor. Another example: laws and programs haven't cured the problem of crime, so we passed law after law until we have a prison system that is a national disgrace. Other brief examples can be used to illustrate the point that the world's solutions do not work.
- E. God works out His plan of salvation at a personal level and at a community level.
 1. A person can find true happiness by having a relationship with Jesus Christ. When living in God's will, a person is capable of having the peace that passes understanding.
 2. The answer to the problems of the world is Christ. This assertion could be described as the radical Christian position. There are few ways of emphasizing the importance of Christ more strongly than by saying that he is the answer to the problems of the world. This approach is sometimes described in literature as the triumphant view of Christianity. It is based on a conviction that in Christ there is power to renew the world. This power cannot be found anywhere else. Only the power of Christ can create fully self-giving relationships, and Christ is the only way the world can be transformed.

Such a position cannot be justified in simple terms, at least not without a great deal of argument. Even at that, the argument probably would not get very far. A person must experience what the power of Christ can do in his/her own life as well as in a group of people. S/he must experience the healing, restoring, and revitalizing action of Christ. Therefore, at this point,

the speaker just states the position. The participants will be convinced of it later, not by any argument presented in the later talks but by experiencing the presence and power of Christ during the weekend and by hearing the witnesses of the speakers as they present the power of Christ working in their own lives.

- F. The ideal of grace is lived in a community of believers who love and support each other.

III. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

This section describes several images of the church. These are not all of the models of the church, but they are the most important ones for picturing the layperson's role in the mission of the Church, which is the heart of the talk.

Sections A, B C and D are presented to overcome false images people may have of the Church. It is not necessary to elaborate.

- A. Some belong to a church because it has a nice building for weddings and funerals.
- B. Some belong to a church for social or professional status.
- C. Some belong to a church in order to do good things for others.
- D. Some people think the church exists only to serve them, their families and their needs.

Sections E, F and G are positive views of the Church that picture its role in the world, pointing to its mission to continue Christ's command to evangelize the world.

- E. This is the same Christ as the one who lived in history. The Church is presented as a community of believers (the body of Christ) whose natural response to God's love is to accept the life God offers. (Hebrews 13:8, I Corinthians 12:27)
- F. The Church seeks to further the kingdom of God to build it up. God's people are the light, salt and leaven for the world. (Matthew 5:13-16)
- G. "We are the Church" is important to the structure of the talk because the main line of thought in the talk is that the mission of the Church is to bring people to Christ and to change the world for Christ. Laypersons are members of the Church. Therefore, the mission of the Church is their mission, and they are called to take part in it.

IV. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

- A. The first part of this section presents the mission of the Church as a continuation of the mission begun by Christ. Jesus came to proclaim His kingdom. All of the aspects of Jesus' life, everything He did and said, were components of His evangelizing activity. Evangelization is the core of what the Church is about. Jesus said: "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God. That is what I was sent to do." (Luke 4:43) We are to be like Christ. The Kingdom of God is so important that, by comparison, everything else becomes secondary. The mission Christ gave his apostles, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19-20) sums up the mission of the Church - to bring all people into the kingdom of God. We are to be like Christ. Accepting Christ changes lives and affects those around us
- B. Since "we are the Church" (the people of God), we each have a share in this

mission. Just as each part of the body has a specific function (an eye cannot hear nor an ear see) so each member of the Church has a specific function. We are all called to the mission of evangelism; we are given different ministries within that mission.

1. Clergy are to train, enable and build up the Christian community so it is able to engage in ministry to build up the body of Christ. Though the Church is to evangelize, it begins by being evangelized itself. The Church needs to listen constantly to what it must believe, to its reasons for hope, and to the commandment to love. Since the Church is immersed in the world and often tempted by the ideals of the world, it always needs to hear the proclamation of the mighty works of God. The primary role of the clergy is the ongoing renewal of the people of God, yet they also participate in the ministry of proclamation to the world at large.
2. The primary role of the layperson is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, a message that the world really needs to hear. The layperson's mission field is the vast and complicated domain of his/her environments: family, job, neighborhood, politics, society, economics, the world of culture, the sciences, the arts, international life, and the mass media, etc.

Some lay people are missionaries, teachers in the church, Associates in Ministry, etc. They are employed as full or part time Church personnel.

- C. The entire emphasis of this talk is to stress the importance of the laity in renewing the world. An idle believer is an oxymoron (a contradiction in terms). It is unthinkable that a person who has been saved and renewed by Christ would not respond by sharing this with others.
- D. The Church is important, not because of doctrine, congregations, programs, pastors, or bishops, but for the sake of Christ's mission to bring all humanity into a relationship with Him. (John 12:32) God formed the Church for the whole world. We are the people who are to extend the redemptive work of Jesus into all areas of our lives in the world. Jesus is the key to solving the problems of the world.

V. THE SPECIFIC MISSION OF THE LAYPERSON

This section is the heart of the talk. It is the first presentation of the vision of the mission of the laity. This talk should not tell how a person is to act, or what is to be done or how environments are to be changed. This talk presents the vision Christ gave to the laity through His body, the Church. The message will be repeated and expanded in later talks.

- A. When we are baptized, we receive a call from God to be His. When we affirm this and accept Christ, we respond to God's command to extend His love to people around us.
- B. As believers, we are to exercise our responsibility where we are in the world, no matter what the consequences.
- C. This section tells us that all of life is the mission field for lay people. It presents the vision of the tasks given the laity by Christ through His body, the Church.
 1. We proclaim the Good News to the world, but how to do it is not explained in detail at this time. This talk is not intended to tell a person how to act,

- what is to be done or how the environment is to be changed.
2. We believe the Good News of Christ, so we repent and reform our attitudes and lives. We work at becoming mature Christians.
 3. We will transform the world around us when we recognize the importance of the mission as our responsibility. When we respond to God's love by living our faith, our visible witness will affect others.
 4. We realize our human and Christian ideal by trying to be like Christ. It is when the believer tries to live in Christ's image that Christ's kingdom is built in the world. Our commitment to be Christ-like extends to all aspects of our lives.
- D. We are called to be saints, forgiven sinners, and to be channels of love for our neighbors. It is mainly through the lay person that ordinary people in society hear the gospel. It is often through a layperson that a non-Christian comes in contact with Christ, hears the message of Christ, and can feel the call to grow and to fulfill God's vision for them. The clergy do not have the same type of contacts that each layperson has, for the clergy are not present in all situations and environments. Laypersons and clergy need to work together.

This section should be stated with excitement, for it is a great vision and ideal for which to strive. This vision is one given to us by Christ. Therefore, the potential exists that we can achieve His goals if we, as His servants, have faith and courage and a Christ-like attitude. (Matthew 25:40)

VI. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAITY'S MISSION

This section briefly outlines the vision, the style, and the breadth of the lay ideal.

- A. The Christian ideal for the layperson is presented here. The mission is unique to each person (believer). The layperson is the bearer of Christ's message. S/he is restless to live according to his/her faith and anxious that the rest of society lives it also. S/he is a prophet of salvation, one who teaches or proclaims God's word. This is not a vague "call to action" but a specific call for each person to live his/her life vibrantly for Christ. Every action and interpersonal relationship is to be lived as Christ desires. Each believer should recognize his/her role as a prophet in our world. Just as an Old Testament prophet was unable to keep from proclaiming the message he'd been given, each believer should be eager to share his/her joy and hope in God with all other people.
- B. However, the believer is not a lone voice crying in the wilderness but is a part of the whole body of Christ. Each Christian carries and shares his/her tasks in the world with others. We sustain one another and work together to challenge the goals and ideals of society. Lay people together live in the world as light, salt and leaven. They are the Church, active and committed members of God's prophetic group.

This topic is repeated and expanded many times in other talks, but it forms an important point in this talk because some participants may be getting nervous about having to preach or be "thrown to the wolves" of society. Thus, it is important to show that the person is not alone but is part of a larger group, a community striving for the same general goal.

- C. Above all, the mission is a work of grace. It is grace being lived fully today. It

is God's life and love overflowing in all situations we touch. It is God's free gift, active in the lives of the laity in the world, affecting the circumstances of life so that the kingdom is built up.

- D. The Christian is called to be a visionary. Each Christian, through the gift of baptism, is given the great gift of knowing the hope of God. S/he forms the link between God and the rest of society and is given the challenge to let God come alive through his/her actions and relationships with other people. The vision s/he is asked to share is the greatest miracle of all--God's desire to link Himself with each person. Each of us, as a member of the Church, walks united in obedience and freedom, initiative and collaboration, with those whom the Holy Spirit has moved to transform the world. What an ideal to live! What a joy to share!
- E. This mission is apostolic. It calls and sends each Christian to share in the apostolic mission of witnessing and calling the world back to God.
 - 1. This is not just a task apart from our everyday lives. To be authentic and convincing, it must emanate from the core of the Christian's being, his/her spirit, regardless of the consequences.
 - 2. This final thought in Section VI is one of the most important points of the entire talk. We are not called to all kinds of activity in the name of Jesus Christ. We are called to BE Christians (living instruments) wherever God has placed us, and to allow our Christian actions and beliefs to be the example and guide for a profoundly better world.

VII. CONCLUSION

This is a summary of the talk. It is a call to all of the participants to recognize the vision God is offering them.

- A. The vision of God's ideal for the world is offered to each baptized believer. The ultimate gift from God to the believer is that s/he is offered the potential to participate, in partnership with God, in the furthering of His kingdom. God has chosen to realize His kingdom through humanity. Without humanity the kingdom will not be realized. The most beautiful part of it is that, as we live our ordinary lives in a God-centered way, our lives become part of the work of the kingdom. God uses us to transform the world around us.
- B. Christians are called to live our lives as modern-day saints. We are to seriously attempt to live a life of love and self-giving and recognize our relationship with Christ, with one another and with all people around us. Christians accept the role of being a channel for God to those around us. We are people who love God, one another and life. We are people who radiate this love to all, letting our hope and trust in God shine like a beacon of joy and hope to the world.