

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!

## LEADERS

Recommended time: 30 minutes

### I. Orientation

This is the last talk on Saturday, emphasizing every Christian's role as a leader in his/her own personal environments. It compliments the Apostolic Action talk, so it is important to keep in mind the main points of that talk: living in grace is the essence of Christianity; radiating God's love and grace is apostolic action; and we live to bring Christ and His love to all those around us. This talk emphasizes every Christian's role as a leader in his/her personal environments or spheres of influence. It does not refer only to those people who are able to shoulder responsibility in institutions or groups. Although some will say, "I wasn't born to be a leader," this talk will show that each person leads in his/her environments by using his/her God-given gifts and talents. This type of leadership is dependent on an on-going relationship with Christ: in Him, through Him and of Him. This talk begins to prepare participants as Christian leaders to return to the world they left on Thursday.

Changing the world depends on each of us. We show what a person empowered by Jesus' love can do when using his/her God-given talents in service to others. Leadership is not meant in the traditional view (president, director, etc.) but is leadership in the individual's own unique environment, utilizing his/her personal talents. Stress is placed on the responsibility of each of us to become a part of the process of transforming the world through Christian leadership. We all can and must do something as active members of the body of Christ. We are all potential leaders.

We want to give an idea of what can be done by a person who is using all of his/her talents and is empowered by the love of Christ to serve others. By "blooming where we are planted" and bearing fruit where we are, we are being Christian leaders. This talk explains the natural and supernatural qualities of leaders. Leaders offer all they have and only what they have or may come to have.

The principle points of this talk:

- Each person is a leader in his/her personal environments.
- Natural and supernatural qualities of leaders are developed by enhancing loving characteristics.
- Transforming the world depends on each individual Christian.
- Each individual is called 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.

### II. General Comments

As the last talk of the second day, Leaders makes all the talks of the day fall into place. Like the Piety talk, it presents a picture of a person who practices everything the previous talks presented -- a leader who has a personal relationship with Christ. With Christ as the center of life, Christian leaders influence those around them, leading others to desire a life of grace. As with all the talks of the second day, this talk emphasizes that becoming a Christian leader is hard work. It takes dedication, discipline, effort and an on-going relationship with Jesus. It cannot just be wished for. In summarizing the day and presenting the picture of a leader, the talk also emphasizes that what has been presented during the day

is possible. This should be the most inspiring talk of the day, because like the Piety talk, its message is, “This works! You can do it too!”

The Piety talk defines the purpose of the Via de Cristo weekend as living the life of grace. The Leaders talk defines it at a different level. It is easy to say that a person must direct his/her entire life to Christ and live the Christian ideal fully and unreservedly. It is another thing to do it. Deciding to become a Christian leader does not automatically result in being an effective Christian in the world. While the Piety talk is a call to be a Christian, the Leaders talk is a call to hear God’s call to be a leader and respond by completely giving oneself to Christ and His purpose for his/her life. A Christian leader hears Christ’s call, throws him/herself decisively into apostolic action and influences others. The weekend encourages each participant to be Christian, but it also encourages each one to be a leader affecting renewal in the Church and the world. This involves the long hard work of actual change, allowing God to change each one to become a more effective Christian leader who follows God’s call to change the world.

The weekend approach to leading a balanced Christian life has been visualized by the use of a tripod or three-legged stool. In order to develop this awareness and response, it is necessary to do the things summarized in the Piety, Study and Apostolic Action talks. The message of the weekend is that in living the Christian ideal, all of life is to be lived for Christ. Christian leaders are leaders in their environments, serving as active members of the body of Christ.

### III. Atmosphere

For most participants, the atmosphere is one of expectation and joy. Many have established a new or deeper relationship with God. Others are struggling with their relationship with Him. The talk speaks to them by reassuring them that a Christian is a real person in every sense, struggling and growing to be human and holy, a mixture of faith and doubt. These people see, through the presentation of the qualities of a Christian leader, that it is a very desirable thing, exemplifying the finest qualities of humanity, fully human and fully alive.

In the preceding talks the participants have been given tools for living a balanced Christian life. Most are in a fairly receptive mood. Reservations they may have had are disappearing. Their concentration is high. They are searching out new ideas and discarding some old ones to which they had been clinging. They are beginning to make sense of what they have been hearing. They are wondering if they can actually apply this in the “real world.” On the other hand, some may be overwhelmed and believe themselves unable to serve as Christian leaders.

Some participants are beginning to think about all they left behind and the difficulties they will face. They have heard a new view of Christian life and many will be wondering if they can actually make personal changes or if they can have an effect in changing the world for Christ. This is the opportunity to inspire the participants with what can be achieved by a group of men and women who bring all their natural and supernatural abilities into action. The speaker is living proof that this is possible. The Leaders talk completes the second day, reassuring all and setting the stage for the third day, helping to remove doubts and anxieties.

### IV. Suggestions for Writing this Talk

The Leaders talk is the inspirational talk of the day and includes much witnessing. It also contains a message that must be clearly presented. It emphasizes that each person's ability to be a leader must be cultivated and strengthened with God's help. Its intention is to give the participants enthusiasm for doing all the things that have been presented during the day. It should provide a living example of the man or woman who is trying to bring all of his/her abilities to serve God, in order to influence all people around them to live the Christian ideal. It is important that the participants understand that they are Christian leaders. They should enter the third day knowing that they are leaders for Christ. This is also the opportunity to reassure people that they can grow in their relationship with God and deepen their faith. This talk should give the participants a model of how to be effective in influencing their environments for Christ.

The Leaders talk contains much witnessing and a message: Christian leadership is not something we either have or do not have. It is something that can and must be cultivated and learned. Every Christian has leadership gifts and qualities that can be enhanced.

The talk should be simple in style, forthright and strong. Through examples, this talk should inspire the participants to visualize themselves as leaders. There are opportunities for telling stories of apostolic successes, stories that show that a Christian leader can influence his/her environments. All stories and/or witnesses should not be about instant successes, but some should show how, even through failure, a person can continue to grow. Success and failure are a part of life. Often unforeseen success is the result of what appeared at first to be a failure. Examples should show men and women in the community who are influencing their environments for Christ in situations similar to those of the participants.

A key emphasis of the talk is that Christian leadership can be cultivated, learned and practiced. Natural and supernatural qualities of leaders are explained with examples of each quality. The purpose of examples is to clarify a point and to show the importance of each quality of a leader. The sections explaining leadership characteristics and demonstrating how to combine the natural qualities with the supernatural qualities of a Christian leader should be the majority of the talk.

Interwoven through the talk are living examples of piety, study and apostolic action shown in the life of a Christian leader. These themes should be apparent. Prayer is the key to Christian leadership, and the point that a Christian leader is one who "prays as if everything depends on God and acts as if everything depends on him/her" should be clearly evident.

The speaker should be a living example of a Christian leader with his/her humanness evident. Personal stories are not to glorify the speaker, but rather to demonstrate a growth process, giving credit for success to God. The witness given in the talk must fit the level of the participants' understanding so that each person can see his/her place in God's plan. At the conclusion of this talk, participants should be able to understand what being a leader is, visualize themselves on the path to Christian leadership and believe that effective leadership qualities can be learned and/or enhanced in every person.

## **LEADERS OUTLINE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. This weekend we are not asking the participants to undertake any special task, carry everyone's burdens or leave their world to join Via de Cristo.

- B. Tomorrow we will return to our places in the world—to our families, workplaces and congregations:
  1. With a new awareness of our part in God’s plan of salvation.
  2. With a desire to contribute all our talents to sharing the light and power of the gospel with our world.
- C. The love of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, empowers us, a nucleus of Christians, to:
  1. Commit ourselves completely to the service of others.
  2. Act in Christ, through Christ and with Christ.

When this happens, our part in the mission, the Christian transformation of society, will have begun. On that day we will be leaders.

## II. DEFINITION

Leaders are people who influence the thinking and actions of others because of who they are and what they do.

- A. We are not talking about those who are “highly placed” or those who have a talent for organizing others. Every situation or environment has people in it who influence what happens. They may or may not be in an official leadership position, but they orient, guide and direct what happens.
- B. Leaders’ decisions, opinions, attitudes and actions influence the decisions, opinions, attitudes and actions of those around them.

## III. NATURAL QUALITIES OF LEADERS

Each of us is unique and must remain so, but all leaders share certain natural qualities that make them effective.

In this section interweave examples of natural qualities of leaders.

- A. Spirit of Initiative.
  1. Ability to reach our own decisions.
  2. Courage to act upon those decisions.
  3. Cooperation with others -- lay and clergy.
- B. Willingness to risk.
  1. Observe the situation, judge what seems right, and then act. (Ephesians 6:16-18)
  2. Don’t fail to act for fear of being wrong.
  3. Stand alone and risk self where justice is needed. (Philemon 4:13)
  4. Wait and pray before acting if we believe this is what the Holy Spirit wants us to do.
- C. Sense of responsibility.  
A leader feels responsibility for a mission.
- D. Personal authenticity.
  1. Be truthful with yourself.
  2. Be who you are created to be.
  3. Be what you say you are.
- E. Generosity.
  1. Give what you have, what you are, and what you can be.
  2. Give yourself totally.

These natural qualities must be continually developed and perfected through a deepening

relationship with God and the development of the following supernatural qualities.

#### IV. SUPERNATURAL QUALITIES OF LEADERS

Supernatural qualities are gifts from God.

Interweave examples of supernatural qualities of leaders.

##### A. Living Faith (Matthew 17:20, Ephesians 6:16)

1. Gives evidence of the living personal God who is always with us.
2. Frees us to continue our spiritual growth.
3. Is a continuous encounter with God in Christ.
4. Is a total 'yes' to God, a personal, mature and dynamic commitment.
5. Is reflected in the witness of our normal daily life.

##### B. Hope

1. Believes in the impossible and lives as if it were a reality. By our hope we make it a possibility. (Mark 9:23)
2. Conquers discouragement because the Lord is with us. Having trusted in God, we commit ourselves to liberating others to live for Christ. (Romans 12:12)
3. Is not to dream, but forms the basis upon which dreams become reality. (Hebrews 11:1) It comes from the knowledge that God is with us.
4. Hope is not just based upon eternal life but upon the knowledge that eternity begins here and now with our action to build the kingdom of God. God frees us from our slavery, whether imposed by others or self-imposed.  
"I will be with you always until the end of time." (Matthew 28:20b)

##### C. Love:

1. Gives of self to others in service. (I Corinthians 13:1-3)
2. Reaches in and touches the heart of another as Christ would. (Romans 12:10)
3. Motivates our service to others. (John 15:13; Romans 13:8b)
4. Imitates Christ, as when He:
  - Fed the hungry.
  - Raised the dead.
  - Healed the sick.
  - Welcomed strangers.
  - Proclaimed the message.
  - Bore the scourges.
  - Evangelized.
  - Visited the prisoners.
  - Forgave others.
  - Gave Himself so we could live.
5. Brings life and hope to a troubled world.
6. Gives us a fresh start each day, putting the pain of yesterday behind us.

##### D. Humility (James 4:10a; Philippians 2:5-8)

1. Comes from our awareness that our abilities are gifts from God. (Ephesians 2:10)
2. Allows us to give God credit for all we do. It is not a feeling of inferiority but is accepting of our God given gifts.
3. Stems from our awareness that every person has his/her own God-given gifts and talents.



4. Allows us to recognize each of our talents and to value them.
5. Allows us to yield to God so He can use our talents for His purposes.
6. Nourishes all the other virtues and facilitates grace. (James 4:6)

## V. CHRISTIAN LEADERS

Christian Leaders combine natural leadership abilities and supernatural qualities.

- A. Learn how to live their response to God, accepting and responding to whatever God has called them to do.
- B. Are aware of their responsibility to use their gifts to share Christ with others.
- C. Strive to use all their God-given resources in spite of their human limitations. Pray as if everything depends on God, and work as if everything depends on you! (II Corinthians 4:7)
- D. Are filled with the Gospel, accept responsibility for their world and commit themselves to improving their world.
- E. Christian leaders:
  1. Proclaim the power of the Gospel. (Romans 1:16)
  2. Invite natural leaders from their environments to a relationship with Christ.
  3. Help others discover God's call in their lives.
  4. Encourage other Christians to live up to their full, created potential. (Ephesians 4:1-3)
  5. Walk the talk.
- F. Christian leaders are involved in the world.
  1. We embrace God's plan; let it be ours. We accept responsibility to bring Jesus' love, compassion and wisdom to the affairs of the world. (John 3:16-17)
  2. We serve as Christ to ease the burdens and pain of others, especially man's inhumanity to man. (Galatians 6:2)
  3. Rather than running from sin and the world, we respond, by the example of our lives, to share Christ with those in all our environments.
  4. We are not to censor or preach. The testimony of our lives must be attractive to others. Instead of judging others, our lives should be living examples of truthfulness and self-giving that attract others to Christ.
  5. We enter the world and embrace it by calling it to freedom in Jesus.
- G. The Christian leader calls the community to its full potential.
  1. By prayerfully maintaining awareness of the state of the world.
  2. By calling the community to prayer, challenging it to grow and to become a light to the world, an example of faith in action.

Live out the call from God given us at the time of our baptism. Even where we lack talent, the Lord makes up for our deficiencies if we live in grace and give ourselves totally to Him. Christ and I are an overwhelming majority.

## VI. ME, A LEADER?

- A. You are here because you are a leader in your family, work and other environments.
  1. You were placed in the world to influence others. (Romans 10:14-15; II Corinthians 3:3)
  2. Often we are leaders without realizing it.
- B. Continue to be a leader, but add Christ.
  1. Be a Christian where you are. Bloom where you are planted.

2. Be permeated by Christ to permeate your environments with Christ.
3. All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good people do nothing.
4. No one can do everything, but each person can do something. (Matthew 25:14-20; Luke 19:12-28).

## VII. CONCLUSION

- A. The world will receive the good news through leaders like each one of us here, as we influence others for Christ.
  1. Not through those who are sad, discouraged, impatient, or anxious.
  2. But through those individuals whose lives radiate the joy and peace of the love of Christ and are dedicated and consecrated to Him.
- B. Christ counts on us as a group, a nucleus of Christians, to put our love of God and our talents into action:
  1. Offering only what we have but all that we have.
  2. Guided by the Holy Spirit.
  3. Bearing witness to the Word
  4. Moved by Christian love to serve the truth.

## CLARIFICATION OF LEADERS OUTLINE

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The participants are here because God has called them to be here. “It was not you who chose me; it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit.” (John 15:16) The introduction reassures participants they are not called to leave their own environments to be effective leaders. Via de Cristo is not an organization one joins but rather a movement that encourages and empowers people to lead a balanced Christian life. We are to fulfill our responsibilities as followers of Christ in our families, our churches, our work places, our social gatherings and wherever we may be.
- B. Participants are reminded that they will return to their lives after the weekend. They will have a new awareness of their part in God’s plan of salvation and the opportunity to “bear fruit” in service to God by living lives of piety, study and apostolic action in a newer, fuller way. Christian leadership is using our talents to share Christ with others and thus be “fruitful.”
- C. This is a short summary of the Apostolic Action talk that introduces participants to the purpose of this talk – to be Christ-centered leaders in their environments. It supports the proposition that all of us are leaders for Christ since we all have influence in some area. Simply by being Christians, we have influence on the people and atmosphere around us through:
  1. Making a commitment to the service of others through our response to God’s love for us.
  2. Acting in Christ’s love, being Christ-like to others, being leaders in a new way, as leaders for Christ.

### II. DEFINITION

Leaders are people who influence the thinking and actions of others because of who they are

and what they do.

- A. Typically leadership is defined as an official leadership position, such as director, president, manager, etc. This talk shows that an official title is not necessary to be a leader.
- B. People are led in all situations, and those who lead are not always those in positions of power. We all are leaders, influencing others through our decisions, opinions, attitudes, and actions. This new definition poses the concept that anyone in any position has influence, including home, work, social activities and all environments. Since each of us has influence on others, each of us has the potential to be the kind of leader God created us to be.

### III. NATURAL QUALITIES OF LEADERS

The qualities that Christian leaders share are distinguished here as natural and supernatural. Leaders of people everywhere share certain natural qualities that enable them to lead. These qualities are well-documented in literature concerned with leadership and success.

- A. Spirit of Initiative
  - 1. Leaders have the ability to reach their own decisions or follow through on the decisions of others. They perceive and act within their limitations, abilities and influence to fill the need.
  - 2. Leaders have the ability to plan and act decisively with courage. They acknowledge reality in the environment, assess direction and resources, consider the problems and are aware of the feelings of the people around them and then courageously act.
  - 3. Leaders cooperate with others toward a common goal or mission. In families, in business, in churches or socially, leaders work together to accomplish the common or agreed upon goal.
- B. Willingness to risk.
  - 1. Leaders recognize a need through observation, do the research when appropriate, consider all possibilities, come to conclusions and then step out. Leaders recognize the necessity to act, and in doing so, are willing to take risks.
  - 2. Leaders are willing to risk failure, unfavorable criticism, or error for a just cause. They admit when they are wrong, ask forgiveness, and start over.
  - 3. If necessary, leaders are willing to stand alone to risk self for a just cause. The goal is important and the risk worth the effort.
  - 4. Sometimes the Holy Spirit nudges us to wait and to do nothing at that time. Pray and listen to the Holy Spirit's direction.
- C. Sense of responsibility.
 

Life is a challenge. Leaders are able to respond to life's challenges and make themselves accountable for their actions. This requires discipline and obedience to follow God's will and not their own. To be responsible is to have empathy, to identify with others and to treat people with real concern, warmth and respect. Leaders have anxiety and fears but know that it is God's grace that makes us strong.
- D. Personal authenticity.
  - 1. Natural leaders are truthful with themselves, trustworthy and keep their word.

2. Leaders recognize their own personal qualities and talents and work within them to reach their potential.
  3. Natural leaders are genuine. They do what they say they will do. They live as they portray themselves to be.
- E. Generosity
1. Generosity means that we give what we have, what we are and what we can become. Leaders give of their time, their talents and their treasures, if necessary.
  2. They are willing to give all of themselves without keeping score. They enable people to grow and develop their talents. When necessary, leaders teach and correct with compassion and acceptance of the person.

To grow in effectiveness, natural leadership qualities must continually be developed. To serve the Lord to the highest degree, Christian leaders actively pursue a closer relationship with God and work to develop their natural qualities.

#### IV. SUPERNATURAL QUALITIES OF LEADERS

Supernatural qualities come from a relationship with God -- qualities that God produces in us. The gifts of natural qualities and supernatural qualities combined are oriented to the service of Christ. Supernatural qualities transform natural leaders into Christian leaders.

##### A. Living Faith

1. The faith that is discussed here is not the faith of dogmas or statements but the faith that speaks of the person's relationship with God; the faith that arises when a person realizes that God has sought him/her and lived with him/her from the person's beginning. (Hebrews 12:2)
2. Living faith, understood this way, is liberating, because renewal is always in progress.
3. Living faith is a continuous encounter with God in Christ in which the initiative comes from God. When God calls to the depths of a person, He enables that person to accept the call to faith. The response is to submit freely to the will of God. (Galatians 2:20)
4. Living faith is a person's total "Yes" to God's call, a stepping out in trust. A child passively accepts what s/he is taught. A Christian leader is moved by a faith that is personal, mature and dynamic. This leads to a true commitment to love the world that God loves.
5. Our faith is obvious to others by the way we live. This allows us to be God's instruments. God calls us to be faithful, not necessarily successful. With God, all things are possible!

##### B. Hope

1. Hope believes that the impossible is possible through God and lives as if the impossible could be reality.
2. Hope turns to God when discouragement comes. Hope comes from knowing God is with us, knowing the work is His and persevering when human hope is gone.
3. Hope trusts in God and is the basis upon which dreams become reality. Hope sustains us during difficult times.
4. Hope is not based solely on the promise of eternal life to come but upon the knowledge that eternity begins now. God frees us from our slavery, whether

imposed or self-imposed. We are freed to achieve a true relationship with God and to help build His kingdom.

#### C. Love

1. Love is more than another quality; it gives feeling, vigor and effectiveness to the other qualities. It is in the spirit of love that we serve the Lord.
2. Love is the giving of self to others in Christ's service and expecting nothing in return. The level of self-giving is the level of one's humanity and spirituality. This is the spirit of God's love lived through us in Apostolic Action.
3. Christian leaders love others as Christ has loved us. The Christian's calling is to serve with the spirit of Christ's love. "We love because He first loved us." (I John 4:19)
4. Love is not limited to other Christians but to be shared with all, with everyone. The gospel message is not restrictive. It does not tell Christians that they can limit their love to other Christians or to those of the same social level or to those of the same skin color or to those who speak the same language -- the list of prejudices and pain-causing reactions is endless. Indeed, the call is for the opposite. The Christian must reach out in love wherever pain exists, in those situations in which it would be much easier to sit back and observe.

The love from God is manifested through us to those in need. There are no mitigating circumstances that excuse or allow for non-love. It is these situations where a person fails to love another that all people sin. Love is forgiving, generous, active and serving. Love knows every person is special in God's eyes. God will judge our service to others. (Matthew 25:34-40)

5. Love brings life and hope to a troubled world. The loving Christian has an obligation to reach out to those in painful situations, whether it be to help reduce prejudice of any kind or to help the poor, the juvenile delinquent, the alcoholic, etc.
6. Love is continually renewed and does not tire or get bogged down in the past. Love does not keep count but starts fresh daily.

#### D. Humility

Humility is sometimes a difficult quality to understand.

1. Humility is the quality that allows us as Christians to recognize our smallness in relation to God and to avoid taking personal credit for all we do. Humility uses all our talents but acknowledges them as gifts from God.
2. Humility is not thinking less of ourselves or having a low opinion of our gifts. It is the freedom not to think of ourselves at all nor to compare ourselves to others.
3. Humility teaches us that all persons are special and unique in God's eyes, no matter how badly the people have been misused or become twisted. Christ loves the Christian to the point of dying for him/her. He also died for the alcoholic, for the prisoner (no matter what the deed), for the homeless, for the successful politician and businessman -- for all! Only the truly humble recognize that all people are as sought after by God as they are themselves.
4. Humility allows us to explore all of our abilities, to acknowledge all of our talents and to put them to use. It allows us to value the gifts God has given us.
5. Humility allows us to avoid "self." We pray and wait, listen to God's word and allow Him to direct our thoughts, words and actions.

6. A proud person sees oneself as the source of one's own talents and, therefore, assumes that a person has the right to use his/her own talents as s/he sees fit. The humble person recognizes God as the source and accepts the responsibility to use God's gifts well.

## V. CHRISTIAN LEADERS

- A. Christian leaders integrate natural qualities with the God-given supernatural qualities. John 15:16 says, "It was not you who chose me; it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit." Christian leaders are chosen by God to share the Good News and to respond to whatever He has called them to do.
- B. As Christian leaders we are asked to make use of our God-given talents, accepting our responsibility to serve others in order to build a better world. No matter the number of our talents, each is asked to use them in service to Christ. We all are witnesses to our family, friends and co-workers and are challenged to utilize our God-given resources.
- C. As humans we all have limitations and make mistakes. This should not keep us from using our talents. God knows our talents; He gave them to us. Can we accept this challenge? The apostle must work as if everything depended on him/her and pray as if everything depended on God.
- D. Christian leaders proclaim the total gospel, calling others to Jesus. They need not travel the globe but rather are to minister to their own unique environments. This makes the task so available and so simple that it is difficult to find reasons to decline. Participants now face the choice to accept God's call, a fearful choice for many. Some feel inadequate. To accept His call to utilize all talents in His service is a major challenge. Presentation of the material, clearly showing that our talents are from God and are used for Him in faith, will assist participants in deciding to accept the challenge.
- E. Christian leaders:
  1. Are knowledgeable about the gospel, and God's power within us gives us the ability to share the gospel with others in our environments.
  2. Share Christ's calling with natural leaders in our environments to develop a relationship with Christ.
  3. Recognize the uniqueness of each person as we assist him/her to recognize his/her calling from God;
  4. Are respectful of others as we try to help each person in his/her own way, calling others to their fullness in Christ.
  5. Live the Christian life as we proclaim it so that the love of Christ shines through us as a beacon to attract others.
- F. Christian leaders are involved in the world.
  1. We know God's plan to "love your neighbor as yourself" and are willing to live out that call. It requires being ready to reach out, take the risk, speak up, share love in His service and accept God's plan as our own. If we truly love one another, we cannot stand by idly. Christians with love and empathy for others will be willing to risk all to help because this is helping Christ himself. If we accept this responsibility, we will build a Christian community.
  2. It is vital for Christians to fill needs as we see them. Our task is to recognize the pain of the world in families, neighborhoods, society, work places and the

- nation. Christian leaders are called to make humanity whole.
3. We must be willing to face the evil of this world in our own environments. Persons willing to risk themselves and their positions by proclaiming the truth overcome evil. This is frightening in an unfriendly atmosphere. If care and love are used to discuss the issues, it is surprising how many will do what is right. The vision of the kingdom of God is important enough to take that risk.
  4. Christians are charged to love as Jesus loved. If we truly love others, we cannot stand by and watch as they hurt. Christian love and empathy for others requires action, loving as Christ loved despite our tendency to judge others. We share the gentle touch of Jesus with all humanity. We allow Christ to speak through us as we respond and fill the needs of others. Our lives demonstrate our true love of Jesus.
  5. Christian leaders lovingly bring others to see the value of faith in Jesus, and we bring others to follow Christ, calling the world to evangelical freedom. Jesus was in the world but not of the world – living in it, seeing his Father in it but pained by the poor treatment of one person by another. Christ died for the world to bring us true freedom.
- G. The Christian leader calls the community to its full potential.
1. Christians live in the fullness of Christ through piety, study and apostolic action. It is important to stress the unique differences of each person as precious gifts from God that strengthen the community. Prayerful attention to the state of the world will assist Christians to view themselves as special in their own environments. They are connected to God through faith, and this helps them form a bond with others in the community.
  2. God is counting on Christians to be leaders for Him. Christians need to grow spiritually and are created to become beacons of light to the world around them. People everywhere need Christ and His touch through Christian leaders.

Christians are asked to use their God-given talents, to live out their sense of responsibility and to engage in service to others. They live out their baptismal call to live in grace and give themselves totally to the Lord. The response to grace will be different in each person. One will have five talents; another two and the third will have one. Each person is to use fruitfully his/her talents for the benefit of others in order to build a better world through Christ.

## VI. ME, A LEADER?

- A. Remind participants they were called by God to attend this weekend.
1. Every person is a leader. All of us witness to our family and friends, influencing them in some way. Whether positive or negative, our witness causes people to change and modify their lives to some extent. Therefore, we all are leaders who influence the thinking and actions of others. (II Corinthians 3:3)
  2. Christians lead others whether we are aware of this or not. Others watch and are influenced by our actions.
- B. We need to keep on being leaders wherever we are.
1. As Christians, we are called to work for Christ faithfully using the gifts He has given us. We must consciously develop and direct our natural qualities to

bring the world to the Christian ideal. We are to be the light of the world, the leaven and the salt of the earth.

2. As we let our souls be filled with the light of Christ, we become more like Christ intended. We participate in God's saving plan for the world. We are responsible for our small corners of the earth as we orient and influence others for Christ. It is enough to develop our individual talents; the rest depends on Christ. (II Corinthians 2:14-17)
3. If we do not proclaim the call of God, evil will continue to affect people. If good people remain silent in the face of pain and injustice, the world will miss the rich and life-giving message of the Gospel, the joy of being free in the Lord.
4. God lives in each person. Each Christian is called to be a leader. Our talents are not equal; no one person can do everything, but every person has something to contribute. Together we can change the world.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The conclusion is a swift-moving dynamic call for each person to answer his/her personal call from Christ. It is a summation of the talk in a ringing style meant to end the day on a strong, positive note that "it can work."

- A. Our world will change when each person answers his personal invitation from Jesus. Christians are called to be Christ's leaders in their environments.
  1. The world is full of people who are sad, discouraged, impatient, or anxious. Each person struggles to overcome these obstacles throughout life.
  2. The world is waiting for the joyful witness of the Christian life. The Christian is called to be the herald of God's kingdom, the harbinger of hope that is active and creative, unbreakable and contagious, flowing from the Easter cross. Each person struggles through the fear and loneliness in the world. A Christian leader is privileged to share the love and self-giving of Jesus that answers those universal needs. Christian leaders work together, using all their God-given talents to serve God.
- B. Christ counts on Christians to put their love of Him into action through using their talents. Apostolic Christians offer all they have, are guided by the Holy Spirit and bear witness. We work as a community, drawing others to Christ. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:15-20) The community has a power that is greater than the sum of the individuals. This point foretells the next day's talks.

"Without God, I am nothing; but Christ and I are an overwhelming majority!"