

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 STUDY AND EVANGELIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Recommended time: 40 minutes

I. Orientation

On the last day of a Via de Cristo weekend, the focus becomes the participants' return home. In the Leaders talk on Saturday we heard of the variety of groups in which we participate and have influence. In the morning meditation the participants heard, "Christ is counting on you." In this talk we hear how we can answer that call to share Christ with our world.

This first talk of the day introduces the Via de Cristo concept of environment--sharing Christ with those we encounter in our daily lives. The challenge is to identify our personal environments and to understand and evaluate them in order to infuse them with God's love. We do not hate the world, try to escape from it or defend ourselves from it, but are to be active in our environments to influence them toward God and Christian values. In this talk, the speaker encourages the participants be open to others and to be aware that they can not do this alone. She/he also proposes a method to follow which is consistent with the gospel. Each of us should bloom where we are planted. This means Christianizing leaders in our environments in order to change it. We begin with ourselves and reach out to others. This influences the entire environment.

Main points of the talk are:

- Christianity is lived in community.
- We need to study our environments in order to influence them to change.
- God gives us what we need to evangelize our environments--make them more Christ-like.
- This is accomplished by working with others who share our mission.

II. General Comments

It is the third day which presents the Via de Cristo method, the strategy of directing our whole lives to Christ and living a balanced Christian life of piety, study and apostolic action. On Sunday we take what we have learned the first two days and challenge the participants to use it to become effective witnesses in the world.

The primary purpose of Via de Cristo is not simply the renewal of the individual or of the church. It has a broader vision of renewal of all society. The Via de Cristo method of living this life of grace provides the backbone for the Christian life. Christians are called to be part of the world, penetrating and transforming it with the power of love that can only be found in a living relationship with a loving God. Only Christians working together can affect spiritual renewal in society. We do not create a para church, but we work within the church and within our environments supported by the Christian community.

Conversion of individuals is only the beginning of changing the environment. We must also consider the effect of the environment as a whole on the people involved. Environmental transformation refers to transformation of the group that makes up the environment. Because we are conditioned by the attitudes, customs and opinions of those around us, we are to be concerned about transforming the way people form their values, attitudes and beliefs and how they interact with one another. The key to this is the apostolic action of groups of people who are directing their whole lives toward God and

who are seeking to influence others in their environments for Christ. Via de Cristo provides a backbone for Christian life--a movement which provides an effective tool for renewal because it includes forming groups of Christians who encourage one another in actively pursuing transformation of their personal environments.

There are three steps to providing a backbone for Christian living:

1. Christian leaders are developed.
2. Christian leaders participate in their individual environments.
3. Christian leaders are linked together to encourage one another in deepening their Christian life and carrying out their apostolic action.

The first step, the development of Christian leaders, was explained in the first two days of the weekend. They are to be well grounded in their Christian faith, their ideal dedicated toward a life in grace (the first day). They are to continuously study and grow closer to Jesus to become equipped to influence others in the way of Christ (the second day).

The second step is outlined in this talk. The participants are asked to transform their current environments. They are not asked to get involved in different environments, but to influence their current situations to be more Christ-like. The final goal is to change the tone and direction of each environment.

The third step is discussed in the Developing Christian Community Within Our Environments talk.

This talk outlines three areas of concern. The effectiveness of apostolic action in each area depends on the others. They are:

1. Ourselves. Strengthening and deepening our own relationship with Christ.
2. Our family and friends. Encouraging them to follow Christ.
3. Our environment as a whole. Changing the tone and direction of the total environment to be more Christ-like.

III. Atmosphere

By the morning of the third day, most of the participants have been touched by God and see themselves from a different perspective. They may have deepened a long-standing relationship with God or formed a relationship with Him for the first time. They have also experienced Christian community in a way few have experienced before. Some are apprehensive, some are confused; most feel challenged to do something. At the close of Saturday's activities, most thoughts were probably directed toward commitment in their own prayer life and toward involvement in church activities but not toward the changing of society as a whole. The challenge in the morning meditation is "Christ is counting on you." It is very important that this challenge be the focal point of all the talks on this last day of the Via de Cristo weekend.

If non-essentials have been introduced into the weekend or if there was too much emotionalism, the participants are more apt to be tired and lose their concentration. Emotionalism often hinders true spiritual growth.

The third day must convert the participants to the Via de Cristo method. It is imperative to keep their attention and to challenge them with Christ's call "Christ is counting on you." Present them with a clear plan they can follow to share Christ within their environments and be a catalyst (be light yeast, salt) for a more Christ-like environment.

IV. Suggestions for Preparing this Talk.

This talk introduces the Via de Cristo method. It is the first talk to present a method for answering Christ's call and sharing the gospel with the world. The talk needs to be clear, systematic, specific and concrete, laying out a method. It presents specific examples of things to do when working with individuals and practical methods that produce positive results. The participants must be assured that the method they will use is viable, so the talk must include many examples of successful study and transformation of environments. Examples should be varied and relate to the environments of as many of the participants as possible. The witness and examples called for in various parts of this talk should be very specific and well chosen. In order to relate to as many environments as possible, it is necessary to give some examples that one cannot illustrate with a personal witness. The examples should be short, direct and positive -- successful examples of the Via de Cristo approach or method. Keep details to a minimum. If the speaker has personally been involved in a group which has actually transformed an environment, the use of that story should be the basic witness throughout the talk, providing concrete examples affirming the success of the Via de Cristo method.

Deliver the talk with optimism and confidence. All witnesses and examples should be directed toward outlining a plan for success.

THE STUDY AND EVANGELIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTS OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Continuous and progressive renewal and deepening of our relationship with God is important.
- B. Laity's mission is to love others and introduce them to a relationship with God. This process will transform all of society to a life in Christ. Christ is counting on you.
- C. The Via de Cristo method is a way of living out this mission.
- D. The environment is the sum of the ideas, persons and circumstances brought about when people are together.

II. CHRISTIANITY

- A. Christianity is community.
- B. Salt, light and leaven must be at work within our environmental groups. (Matthew 5:13-16, I Thessalonians. 1:4-10)
- C. We are called to be in the world.

III. ENVIRONMENT

- A. The basis of the strategy is that we live our lives as part of groups of people.
- B. In each group of people:
 1. Certain ideas and attitudes are accepted in the group, certain behavior is encouraged and various ideals are present.
 2. A group ideal is created as individual ideals and circumstances interact.

3. A certain spirit is generated.
- C. The environment has a vital impact on people.
 1. People tend to conform to the spirit generated by a group.
 2. People with ideals and drive will structure, change and influence the environment. Give examples.
 3. We must influence the environment more than it influences us.

IV. HOW WE CAN TRANSFORM OUR ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHRIST

- A. Study the environment. We must know the people, circumstances and nature of the environment to develop a plan to transform it.
 1. The nature and influence of the group spirit.
 2. The environment's effect on surrounding environments.
 3. The influence this environment has on me. (Romans 12:21, Romans 12:2)
- B. Study the spirit generated in the environment.
 1. What is the group ideal (motivating force)?
 2. How do these ideals affect relationships in the group? Give examples.
- C. Study the people and their place in the environment.
 1. In each environment we will find:
 - a. Followers
 - b. Impulsive people who do not hold strong convictions.
 - c. Leaders. (II Timothy 2:2)
 2. Study the ideal of the leaders.
 - a. How far are they from the Christian ideal?
 - b. How can we share Christ with them? (Romans 11:16)
- D. We need to respect the variety of beliefs and faiths in our society when planning apostolic action.

V. THE METHOD OF CHRISTIAN TRANSFORMATION OF ENVIRONMENTS (apostolic action)

Most environments lack loving relationships. Loving relationships develop only by the giving of ourselves. We must look at ourselves, our friends and our environments. We should be modeling and encouraging self-giving, loving relationships.

- A. Ourselves. We must first change ourselves.
 1. God works in our lives, equipping and empowering us to be effective agents of change only to the extent that we allow Him to work in our lives. This demands courage and effort--continually directing our whole lives to God and His will for us. In this talk "ourselves" also includes groups of Christians who direct their group activities to God.
 2. God gives us:
 - a. The Holy Spirit. (Philippians 4:13) The power that enables us to do His will.
 - b. Will. Determination and planning to share Christ.
 - c. Knees. The levers of the apostles. Talk to God about your friend before talking to your friend about God.
 - d. Intellect. God-given knowledge. Be conscious of doing Christ's business. (Romans 13:14)

- e. Heart. (John 13:34-35) This has two meanings:
 - 1). Hope. Knowing we will succeed because God wills it.
 - 2). Love. Being a part of the lives of others in order to share Christ with them and encourage their Christian growth. (I Corinthians 9:22)
- B. Sharing Christ with our family and friends.
“The fields are ripe but the harvesters are few.” (Matthew 9:37) We have been chosen by God and entrusted with sharing the Gospel with our daily companions. The steps are:
 - 1. Heart. Win their hearts to open their minds.
 - 2. Intellect. Help them understand who Christ is and the life He offers by sharing Christ with them. (Acts 8:26-40, Romans 10:17, II Timothy 4:1-2)
 - 3. Will. Encourage them to make a conscious decision to accept Christ and desire to follow Him.
 - 4. Knees. Pray with them and for them.
- C. Groups around us. (Our environments)
The world needs Christ. This means bringing individuals and groups of people in our environments to Christ.
 - 1. Our own deepening relationship with God and our on-going spiritual growth influence our environments. (Luke 14:34)
 - 2. Consider the situation as a whole. Pay attention to personal interactions in the group.
 - 3. Identify the leaders and influence them to change their lives and thinking. If leaders accept Christ, they will bring others to Him. There are three contributions Christians can make:
 - a. Self-giving.
 - b. Recognizing God’s work in the environment.
 - c. Being interested in others and their gifts.
 - 4. Bring salt, light, leaven into the environment.
 - a. Joy and happiness are the flavor of Christian life. (I John 1:1-4, John 15:11)
 - b. The spirit of truth sheds the light of the gospel on all activities. (John 14:26)
 - c. Encourage others to grow and deepen their faith and develop a plan for apostolic action that enriches the environment like leaven. Christians need to join with others who have the same ideal. It takes group effort to evangelize the environment.
 - 5. Proclaim the gospel through your actions and words. Respect others’ ideas and rights. Do not give orders or direction, but show the way.
 - 6. Prayer is a first priority. We are only God’s instruments in changing the tone and direction of an environment so people will share Christ with others.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. My environment is wherever I live and deal with people wherever I find myself right now. My situation, for instance my family or my job, is the place to start. The environment will resist change. As we seek to draw people to Jesus Christ,

- we will encounter obstacles.
- B. Our task, changing our environment, is achieved by introducing new life into the environment, an authentic Christian life. It indeed changes things!
 - C. Tomorrow we will find the world as we left it Thursday. Nothing will have changed.
 - 1. The key to introducing new life into our environments is the apostolic action of groups of Christians deepening their life in Christ and radiating this life into their environments. The reflection of Christ's life in our life will lead others to the cross.
 - 2. The world has not changed, but I have. The changes within me can be the leaven that influences my environments for Christ.

CLARIFICATION OF THE OUTLINE - THE STUDY AND EVANGELIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

This is a very structured talk. The founder of Cursillo thought this talk presented information that was new for most participants. It is organized around the idea that we must be working in three areas simultaneously to bring the world to Christ: first, ourselves, deepening our relationship with God; second, others, seeking to draw them to Christ; and third, the environment as a whole, seeking to change the tone or spirit of the environment to be more open to receiving Christ. This talk ties these three things together into a plan of apostolic action.

- A. During the first two days of the weekend we experience the love and grace of God. It leads us to understand the need for a full commitment to Christ and continuous, life-long deepening of our relationship with Him.
- B. We are called not only to follow Jesus Christ but also to share Him and His salvation with the world. Our entire society needs this renewal. This radical solution for the world's problems is the only solution--Jesus Christ. Laity's mission is to transform all of society with God's love. Christ is counting on us. This call was first heard in the Layperson as Church in the World talk and repeated in the Sunday morning meditation. It should be repeated here. Just as our individual happiness lies in Jesus, so do the problems of the world. Transforming society is the mission Jesus gave us.
- C. Via de Cristo provides a strategy for living out this mission. As pastors and lay persons, our mission is to be the Church in the world. Today's talks will outline this strategy and method.
- D. Definition of environment.

II. CHRISTIANITY

This portion of the talk is intended to show that Christian community is the under

girding of the Via de Cristo strategy. This community carries out Christ's call to bring the gospel to the world in order to transform society. There is no Christian life without community. This community is the light, salt, and leaven to the world, giving divine life to all of society. It cannot be closed in on itself. The Christian community must be willing to take risks -- not only being in contact with the world, but also fully participating in it.

- A. Christianity is community. Christ came that everyone would know the Father. As Jesus' followers and as His body, the Church, we are called to share our faith with the world. This can only be accomplished by being involved in the lives of others and having the support of the Christian community.
- B. We do not do this work in our own strength. Jesus is the salt, light and leaven that works within individuals, groups and societies. He gives light to the truth, the flavor of grace in relationships, and raises persons and groups to their divine potential.
- C. Christians who have been changed by God's grace and love and who share this good news with everyone around them will transform their environments. We are called to be in the world, not to protect ourselves from it.

III. ENVIRONMENT

Having summarized the basic ideas previously presented during the weekend, the speaker now explains the key concept of the Via de Cristo method. In Via de Cristo, the word environment is used differently from the common understanding of environment. It refers to people, not physical surroundings. A person's environments are their family, workplace and social groups, etc.-- those groups with whom they spend their time. The environment includes the over-all tone, the climate, and the spirit of the different groups. What a particular environment is like depends on the members of the group. Also important is the concept that environment does not refer to the people individually, but the group as a whole. Certain types of groups form when people get together. For example, a person may react differently depending on which group s/he is in -- family, work or locker room. Acceptable attitudes and behavior change from situation to situation and influence the behavior of the group. The effect we have on others depends on the situation in which we meet them.

The basis of the strategy:

- A. We all live our lives as integral parts of groups of people (family, work or profession, friends, etc.) that in turn are part of the larger political, socio-economic, civic and cultural groupings in society.
- B. We are all members of several environments: family, work, congregation, neighborhood, social and recreational groups, etc. We must begin to think of each of these as an environment.
 - 1. We study each environment to determine its pervading spirit and its ideal. Some strong personalities have a greater influence in the group than others do. The group will give greater weight to their ideas.
 - 2. Customs and practices of the group will influence group members. We also need to understand that we are products of the environments in which we live. Our expectations of life here in the United States were shaped by the society in which we grew up and lived our lives. In the United States a great deal of importance is placed on education and material success. In other

cultures, greater value is given to such things as relationships, the extended family, living in harmony with the earth and finding one's place in God's plan.

3. Because of the purpose of the group and its activities, each group generates a certain spirit. For example, the spirit of a baseball team will be different from the spirit of a work group or a church committee.
- C. The environment has a vital impact on people.
1. Our environments influence and condition our lives. People tend to conform to the spirit and ideal that pervade the environment.
 2. All environments are capable of being transformed. Leaders with conviction and drive can do this. Give examples.
 3. We must influence our environments more than they influence us. This is possible only with the support of our Christian community. In order to influence our environments, we need to resist their impact on us and exert Christ's influence on the environments.

IV. HOW WE CAN TRANSFORM OUR ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHRIST

This is the heart of the talk. We need to study each environment and then develop a strategy to change it for Christ. We carefully examine all of the factors: the influence of the environment on us, the interdependence of environments, the human factors and all other circumstances that influence each environment.

- A. Carefully study a particular environment to develop a strategy for change.
1. What is the nature and influence of its spirit and its group ideal?
 2. What is its effect on surrounding environments? Environments are not isolated. Each person is an integral part of several environments. Consider the impact of broader social, political and economic environments that influence the basic environments.
 3. How much influence does this environment have on me? Once we have considered this question, then we can plan how to work from within to change it. Carefully weigh all factors. It is difficult to accurately study our environments. The personality of a group is greater than the sum of the personalities of its members.
- B. Study the spirit being generated.
1. What is the ideal of the environment? Determine the motivating force of the group, i.e., material possessions, power, pleasure, making money, professionalism, etc. Highly motivated people have a stronger influence on the ideal of the group and influence others.
 2. How does this ideal affect relationships in the environment? Depending on the ideal, it can have a negative impact on those involved. Give examples from your own life. Possible examples include: Parents who are so busy acquiring material things (their real ideal) that they do not take the time to nurture their children. Congregations that grow so inward that others feel unwelcome and/or they have no involvement in the community. Businesses so concerned with profits that employees and/or customers are exploited. A government organization so centered on maintaining itself and its structure that it does not provide the services it was created to perform or serve the

people it was meant to serve. A group of friends motivated by materialism or pleasure. Only by understanding these motivating forces and the personalities involved can we understand how the group will act. For instance, people in a cutthroat business probably act differently when they bowl together. It's the same people, but a different group goal or ideal.

Which person in the group is influencing others? It may not be the official leader in the group, but the person others follow. These people seem to have risen above the pressure of the environment. They subtly lead others and the environment to a different way of acting and thinking. Their behavior is internally consistent and independent of others in the environment. We must be aware of each person's place in the environment.

C. Study the people and their place in the environment.

1. In each environment we find:

- a. Followers. They lack strong convictions and usually follow the actions and decisions of others.
- b. Impulsive people. They do not hold strong or consistent convictions. They let their emotions carry them.
- c. Leaders. They use their abilities to accomplish what they see as worthwhile. They show the way. They are catalysts for change. If we can find the leaders in the environments and lead them to Christ, they will change their environments.

This is a key concept of the Via de Cristo method. If we can influence the leaders of the environment to accept the Christian ideal, these environments will become Christian communities. So, we determine who the leaders are, become friends with them, learn their ideal, and share Christ, the Christian ideal, with them.

2. What is the ideal of the leaders? (Power, possessions, influence, etc.) How far is this from the Christian ideal? How can you bring them to the Christian ideal? (Romans 11:16) Formulate your plan of apostolic action.

D. Respect the reality of religious pluralism in the United States.

We have to remember that the United States, in this post-Christian era, is no longer a "Christian" nation. Increasingly, there are multiple religious traditions in our communities, in addition to the variety of Christian denominations. Being attentive to this fact requires special care in planning the Christian transformation of our environments. For those who are churched or unchurched, but Christian in orientation, our goal is to lead them to Christ and/or deepen their relationship with Christ. In our contacts with non-Christians, we must respect all they hold to be good and holy. We can gently lead them only by understanding each person's unique background and belief system. We attempt to bring Christian values into the environment and introduce people to our friend Jesus. We allow everyone to grow as a person and as a child of God. We must be understanding and compassionate, not judgmental. It is possible to change the environment even if each person in the environment does not accept Christ.

The point of this section is that we recognize the prevalent ideal in the environment. How far is it from the Christian ideal? We then formulate a plan to change the ideal of the natural leaders in the environment. The goal of the

environment usually supercedes the ideal of any one person. It is possible for the environment to become more Christ-like even if some of the people retain their personal beliefs that are not Christian, but are, for instance, Muslim or Hindu.

V. THE METHOD OF CHRISTIAN TRANSFORMATION OF ENVIRONMENTS (apostolic action)

The basic ingredient in bringing our environments to Christ is relationships: personal relationships within the environment and the relationship between the environment and the outside world. One result of having a relationship with Jesus is being able to give of yourself to other people. Once people have a self-giving relationship with others, both within the environment and external to it, the tone within the environment can change toward a more Christian ideal. Most environments are missing loving relationships. Only the giving of oneself that is empowered by God's love produces these loving relationships. In forming a plan to change our environments, we should consider three aspects: ourselves, our family and friends, and groups around us (the whole environment).

A. Ourselves

1. In this context we are not thinking only of ourselves as individual people, but those of us in this room and even beyond this room who hold these same beliefs. Some may have participated in Via de Cristo or related movements, perhaps even making it possible for you to be here. They are people with whom we feel at one in spirit because we have the same ideal. This demands courage and effort because we will become close to each other. We are on a lifetime journey to become more Christ-like and each of us has a long way to go.
2. For this journey, God gave us the Holy Spirit, our will, our knees, our intellect and our hearts.
 - a. The Holy Spirit. God gave us the Holy Spirit to instruct us, lead us, teach us, and enable us to do His will. (John 16:13a)
 - b. Our will. Determination is the first requisite for action. We form groups to grow closer to God and closer to our sisters and brothers in Christ. The purpose is to plan and carry out our desire to share Christ within our environment. We do not wait for "apostolic accidents."
 - c. Our knees, the levers of the apostle. Talk to God about your friend before talking to your friend about God. We do not "go off" on our own, but pray for God's guidance and direction before reaching out to others.
 - d. Our intellect. "Put on the mind of Christ." (Romans 13:14) Successful apostolic action takes planning. It requires knowledge and a consciousness of what we are about -- leading others to faith in Jesus.
 - e. Our hearts. This has two meanings.
 - 1) Hope. We know that even if we have difficulties or if we fail, God can succeed when it is within His will.
 - 2) Love. Because God loves us, we can love others and give of ourselves. We participate in the lives of others in order to share the love of Christ with them. (I Corinthians 9:22)

Any environment will be transformed to the extent that: we personally are conforming our own lives to the will of God; we have committed ourselves to transform our environments for Christ; we plan specifically to become friends with others and share Christ with them; we spend time in prayer, dying to self and dedicating ourselves to God in order to be His instruments; we put on the mind of Christ through study so we can pass on the gospel message with authenticity; we plan a strategy for transforming the environment, giving as much attention to this as to the affairs of the world; and our hearts are filled with the love of God and love of others, which wishes the best of what we have for them -- our relationship with Christ.

B. Our family and friends.

This is the second aspect of the environment we are called to evangelize. We use the same tools as above, but in different order. The steps in working with others are:

1. Their heart. We first win the hearts of our friends by giving them constant, genuine love. We become friends through kindness, caring, help, understanding and a genuine interest in their problems. By experiencing Christ in us, our goal is that they become friends of Christ. If we don't win their hearts first, we speak to closed minds. Everyone has a basic hunger for God. They will open up and question us about our lives only if they see something in us that they want for themselves. This gives us the opportunity to share concretely what Christ has done in our lives and to proclaim the gospel to them.
2. Their intellect. They must understand who God is before they can come to Christ. Being a good example is not enough. We must share the gospel. Sharing the meaning of Christ in our own lives is a powerful tool. (Acts 8:26-40, Romans 10:17, II Timothy 4:1-2)
3. Their will. They must make a conscious decision to accept Christ and desire to follow Him. Everyone has a basic hunger for God. St. Augustine once said that every man yearns for God and never rests until he finds Him. In spite of that, many people remain closed and fearful because of pressures in society to lead the "good life."

As a true friend, we do not force our views on others. Instead, we work patiently, helping our friends question the world's values and the personal values that have been guiding their lives. They must see in us the life they desire. We must invite them to desire the true ideal that can bring them happiness. We can then invite our friend to make a decision for Christ.

4. Knees. We pray with them and for them. In God's time, our friends may come to know Christ because we are open channels of grace for them.

Renewal is a complex process and is a gift from God. We need not be overly concerned about success. We need to trust that God's love and grace will be poured upon our friends and to remember that they will come to Jesus in their own time. Because all people have free will, what we offer may be rejected. Our concern is not to judge but to stay focused on our desire to be in God's will and to grow in faith and service to others. God calls us to be obedient and faithful, not successful. Changing hearts is

God's work.

C. In the environment, the groups around us.

We must be concerned about the spirit of the entire environment in addition to our Christian growth and the Christian growth of the leaders who are our friends in the environment. The world needs Christ to solve its problems. This means bringing whole groups of people in our environment to Christ. It takes careful planning to change the tone and direction of the environment to the Christian ideal. When people come together in this spirit, they will be leading each other to Christ. We are not expected to do it alone.

1. Those who lead Christian lives affect environments. By intentionally and continually directing our lives to Christ, we affect the environment. (Luke 14:34)
2. Pay attention to people's interactions. Because it does little good to change the rules and regulations within the environment, we must first change the lives and mentality of key people in order to penetrate the environment as a whole. A nucleus of Christian leaders will affect the environment.
3. Lasting changes happen when the lives and thinking of the leaders change. When the leaders accept Christ, they will share Him with others. Three contributions the Christian can make to improve the tone of the environment:
 - a. Give to others. Be optimistic. Exude Christian joy and happiness. Arrange celebrations of life events in the group. Help people share their lives with one another to bring a spirit of unity to the group,
 - b. See God's work in all that happens in the group. Then help others see God at work in their lives and in the lives of others.
 - c. Be interested in others. Become aware of their talents and look for ways to use them for the good of the community.
4. Be salt, light, leaven
 - a. Joy and happiness are the flavor of the Christian life. (I John 1:1-4, John 15:11)
 - b. We need the light of the gospel to expose the confusion in the world. (John 14:26)
 - c. To raise the tone of the environment as leaven, we need to take time to help people to develop their specific talents, reach their potential, and grow in their faith and apostolic action. We do not do this alone, but join with others so it becomes a group effort to evangelize the environment.
5. Do not force or coerce anyone. Our task is to sow the seed, work and persevere. God will reap the harvest. We are simply to show the way to faith in Jesus and a fulfilling life. Following the Lord's example, a true apostle leads people to question their values, then shares the gospel with them. We must be a good example and show them the way. Respect their beliefs while helping them see that God's plan for them is greater than they now comprehend.
6. The basic ingredients in the life of an apostle are constant prayer and self-sacrifice. True humility is recognizing that we are His instruments, using

our talents for His service. People see us as different and also recognize why we are different. Only when we reflect Christ will we draw them to Christ.

VI. CONCLUSION

Changes will not take place in our environments just because we have been on this Via de Cristo weekend. It is only when our lives have changed in a way that attracts others that they will open themselves to us and make it possible for God to reach them.

- A. We all live in several environments. We need to consider how each of them could become more Christ-like. There will be obstacles, but we need to persevere.
- B. Our task is to bring our environment to reflect the Christian ideal more closely. We begin where we are -- at home, at work, with our friends. Environments are not easily changed. Even if most people in the environment do not accept Christ, the spirit of the group can become more self-giving (Christ-like). Be prepared for obstacles and challenges.
- C. When we return home, we will find the world unchanged from the way we left it Thursday. Our job is to study and influence the environment surrounding us. Those around you have not changed, but you have changed. Our change can be the leaven that brings new life, a fully Christian life, into our environment to change it.