

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!

## **GROUP REUNION AND ULTREYA**

Recommended Time: 45 minutes (plus optional demonstration Group Reunion)

### **I. Orientation**

This talk presents the heart of the Via de Cristo method, Group Reunion and Ultreya, which prepares the participants for the Fourth Day. This is an enthusiastic talk. It projects joyful hope and further develops the plan of how to share Christ with the world in an intentional, planned manner, supported by the Christian community.

Christianity is meant to be lived in community. The Group Reunion is a method of developing community that encourages Christians to continue their growth in grace and to share their faith in the world. The purpose of Ultreya is to strengthen and support the Group Reunions and promote mutual encouragement in apostolic action.

The main points of the talk are:

- 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, a reunion of groups, includes a broader spectrum of the Christian community.
- Without Ultreya it is harder for a Group Reunion to reach its purpose of sharing Christ with the world.

### **II. General Comments**

This talk presents the Via de Cristo method of living a Christian life. It explains to the participants how they can maintain what they received during the weekend and how they can persevere in Christian growth and in witnessing in the years to come. It adds the last piece. Participants now have the whole picture.

Preparation for this talk began on the first day when the ideal of living a Christian life was presented. Participants also heard a call to dedicate their whole lives to Christ in the Piety talk. On the second day they heard that it takes a life balancing piety, study and apostolic action to be an effective apostle. The third day shows the way this is to be lived out in their lives. The piety section of the service sheet, presented in the Life in Grace talk (sometimes called the Christian Life talk) on Sunday, is the means of deepening our life in Christ. The Developing Christian Community Within Our Environments talk shows the need to work together with other Christians. The Group Reunion and Ultreya talk shows that by working together, Christians can continue their dedication to the Christian ideal and grow as effective witnesses.

The focus of this talk is the value of on-going personal relationships with other Christians to continue growing toward the apostolic ideal. Very few people can do this alone. The speaker shows by example the importance of personal friendships with other Christians who share their vision of bringing Christ to the world and describes the way these relationships can be maintained. The focus is the value of personal sharing as the heart of friendships with other Christians. Christian faith is strengthened and deepened by being shared. The talk goes on to show, by explanation and personal witness, how the

two parts of the Fourth Day program fill the needs of the participants. This structure is valuable only when people want to do something and are looking for a way to do it. The most common failure of Group Reunions is that members have not used the group for the purpose it was created, or they fail to link the group to the larger community of the Ultreya.

Group Reunion and Ultreya are treasures of Via de Cristo. The central message of this talk is the need for community and friendship in Christ and the importance of personal sharing in our lives. The talk is divided into two parts: 1) Stressing the need for sharing with our friends in order to support each other and to grow in faith and as we reach out to our environments, and 2) Illustrating how Group Reunion and Ultreya fill this basic need. The structure and purpose of the Group Reunion and Ultreya must be explained, and the speaker shares his/her personal witness of Group Reunion and shows how his/her Christian life was strengthened through Ultreya. Structure and correct technique alone are not enough for Group Reunion or Ultreya to work. It also takes lives dedicated to Christ.

This talk is the pinnacle of the weekend. Its purpose is to ready participants for Group Reunion. Too many participants have a good experience on the weekend but then don't grow in Christ or witness to their faith. The main reason is failure to participate in a Group Reunion. We must emphasize that a Christian cannot make it alone. We need accepting, loving friends who are sources of God's grace in our lives. Too often groups fail because the members do not persevere to reach true friendship. Sometimes participants do not feel accepted and leave in pain and disillusionment. The speaker should stress the need to find a friend to share with, someone who accepts us where we are and holds us accountable. We may need to try several groups to find one that works for us. It takes concentrated effort and dedication from all the group members for it to work.

Ultreya is the second half of the perseverance method. It is a gathering of Group Reunions. To achieve maximum growth requires both Group Reunion and Ultreya. Either one by itself eventually leads to disillusionment and discouragement or to a lack of personal growth.

### III. Atmosphere

By the time this talk is presented, participants should be prepared to receive the idea of Group Reunion and Ultreya and understand its importance for them. The atmosphere leading to this talk is a combination of joy, fire to do the Lord's work, and concern about how to continue this closeness with God when they go home. Some may hesitate to accept the message, but the prime concern of the movement (including the weekend experience) is preparing Christians for the Fourth Day. The speaker needs to show that it is possible to continue to live life in this way after returning home.

It is important to assure the participants that this weekend experience is only the first step to a life-long growth in grace. It can shape the rest of their lives if they follow through with Group Reunion and Ultreya to sustain their growth and to receive encouragement for their apostolic action.

By this time of the weekend everyone is tired and saturated with lots of words. They need just enough of the mechanics to assure them that the method is sound and a strong witness of the method's effectiveness in the life of the speaker. They must see that it can

work for them as well as it has for the team members they encountered this weekend.

The key for the speaker is confidence. Some participants may be feeling insecure.

#### IV. Suggestions for Writing the Talk

This talk builds on the entire weekend. Use references to other talks and insights into the weekend so participants will understand that we are outlining a plan to extend the weekend into the rest of their lives. The talk must be strong, sharing “down” times as well as “up” times. It shows a glimpse into the life of a person who has dedicated his/her life to Christ and has learned and grown through use of the Via de Cristo method. Most of the effectiveness of the talk is through the personal examples shared. Explaining the Group Reunion card is a chance to share the daily life experiences of a Christian living the Fourth Day. As you share examples of piety, study, failures and successes in your apostolic action, your closest moment to Christ and your apostolic plan for the coming week, you are sharing your personal life.

Your goal is to motivate participants to attend Ultreya and to share their lives with Christians from other environments. The talk should explain clearly the importance of Group Reunion and Ultreya as the fruits of Via de Cristo and should give a concrete picture of what living the Fourth Day is like.

Progression of the third day talks:

The Study and Evangelization of the Environment -- the strategy.

Life in Grace -- the means of deepening contact with Christ.

Developing Christian Community Within Our Environments -- the importance of working together.

Group Reunion and Ultreya -- the Via de Cristo method of on-going relationship with other Christians.

Fourth Day -- the witness of one who has persevered in the Fourth Day.

The Group Reunion and Ultreya talk focuses on personal sharing as the heart of on-going relationships with other Christians. Lives dedicated to Christ are strengthened and deepened when shared. Fourth Day groups encourage and support us as we reach out to others with Jesus’ love.

In order for this talk to bear fruit, certain conditions must be met within your Via de Cristo community. One is that the leaders of the movement are people who are living the Via de Cristo message and making good use of the Via de Cristo method. The only way to effectively talk about this is to be part of a loving, caring Group Reunion and a lively, life-giving Ultreya that are working toward the ideal of bringing the world to Christ. These are cornerstones of Via de Cristo.

You must share the structure of Group Reunion and how this tool has been helpful in your life. Structure maintained for its own sake is destructive. It is of value only when people want to do something and are looking for a way to do it. It is only when the speaker explains the use of the structure that the participants get an idea of what Group Reunion is about. Each section of the Group Reunion card must be explained during your talk, with personal examples of how it applies to life and how everyone can use it.

We are offering a proven method. Participants must be shown that to try to go it alone is likely to be spiritual suicide. At best, they will simply resume their old life. They must see that the community offered by Via de Cristo will meet their needs. One of the ways to show the power of the method in your life is to share the personal benefits of

## Group Reunion and Ultreya.

Demonstration of a Group Reunion is optional. The form used for sharing is the same as the form of a basic Group Reunion, stressing our piety, study and apostolic action. Two or three members of the team (other than the rector) should share their lives. Like the Group Reunion and Ultreya talk, this has two purposes. It gives a clear picture of what Group Reunion is like, and it gives those persons a chance to share with the participants the life they have lived during the past week. It provides another picture of developing Christian community using the Via de Cristo method, and it shows in concrete ways what the lives of these Christians has been like that week. These people should have been chosen during team formation and should be solid in their understanding and use of their Group Reunion. They should be well prepared and have something to share for all the questions about apostolic action in particular. This is an opportunity for brief personal testimony. It gives the participants a chance to see what Group Reunion is like. The demonstration must show that what is proposed on this weekend is possible and can be successful. Those participating in the demonstration need to be people who take their commitments seriously and make the effort to live the apostolic ideal. Participants don't need to be shown how Christians fail. They already know that. They need to know that the Via de Cristo method works. The group should be as natural and relaxed as possible under the circumstances. It should be less than fifteen minutes.

If a demonstration is not used, a Group Reunion should be experienced at each table, led by the table leader during discussion time. This would focus on the "how to" since they have just heard the "why." This gives the participants a taste of what a group reunion is like.

All of Sunday should present convincing testimony that the Via de Cristo method is an effective way to live the Christian ideal. Christ is counting on you.

## **GROUP REUNION AND ULTREYA OUTLINE**

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. If this weekend experience simply fades into a pleasant memory, it will have little effect on the advancement of the Kingdom, either within you or in the world.
- B. God called you to this Via de Cristo weekend to:
  1. Direct your whole life to God. (Piety)
  2. Develop a fully Christian attitude by transforming your mind. (Study)
  3. Be an evangelizer, witnessing to Christ in your life. (Apostolic Action)
  4. Be God's agent for change to those you influence. (Leaders)
  5. Attempt to transform each of your environments into a living Christian community. (Study and Evangelization of the Environment)
  6. Be the Church in the world where you live. (The Layperson as the Church in the World and Developing Christian Community within Our Environments)

- C. In order to meet this challenge you need to allow the Holy Spirit to change your life and help you persevere.
- D. Via de Cristo provides a proven method to persevere. It will enable you to continue to grow in your faith and share the gospel with all parts of your world.

## II. THE VIA DE CRISTO METHOD OF PERSEVERANCE

- A. Spiritual direction (by pastor or mature Christian).
- B. Group Reunion (of friends).
- C. Ultreya, (a larger Christian Community).

## III. THE PURPOSE OF THE GROUP REUNION

- A. The group, based on friendship, is meant to accelerate:
  - 1. The individual spiritual growth of each member.
  - 2. The realization that the Christian community is the Church in the world. We are the Church.
  - 3. The commitment to be evangelizers in our families, neighborhoods, professions, places of work, etc.
- B. Group Reunion is the practical way of sharing our Christian faith among friends:
  - 1. To unite us with friends in order to live our lives for Jesus.
  - 2. To encourage growth and maturity in faith, hope and love.
  - 3. To form deep personal relationships based on our common ideal and values.
  - 4. To keep us accountable in carrying out our piety, study and apostolic plans.

## IV. THE METHOD OF THE GROUP REUNION

- A. Sharing and planning in small groups enhances and encourages growth. So we:
  - 1. Share our piety, study and apostolic action from the previous week.
  - 2. Review our successes and failures.
  - 3. Plan how to integrate our piety, study and apostolic action into our lives for the coming week.
  - 4. Depend on the group for encouragement and strength to live the Christian life, as well as keeping us accountable for carrying out our plans.
- B. The three components of leading a balanced Christian life are reviewed weekly in a concrete way.
  - 1. Piety. How have you nourished your relationship with Jesus this week?
  - 2. Study. What have you done to deepen your understanding of Christ and His will for your life?
  - 3. Apostolic action. How have you lived out God's command to bring Christ and Christian values into our world?
- C. At this point the speaker explains the reunion card.
  - 1. Pray the "Come Holy Spirit" prayer.
  - 2. Piety
    - a. What spiritual helps have nourished your relationship with Christ this week? (John 15:5)
    - b. What moment during this past week were you most aware of the presence of Christ?
    - c. What is your plan to deepen your relationship with Jesus in the coming



- week?
3. Study
    - a. What have you done to increase your knowledge of God and His will for your life?
    - b. What was the most helpful spiritual insight from your study this week?
    - c. What is your plan for continued study?
  4. Apostolic Action
    - a. What success have you had this week in witnessing and serving in your family, work or other environments?
    - b. What disappointments have you experienced this week in witnessing and serving your family, work, or other environments?
    - c. What is your plan for apostolic action in the coming week?(Option 1 -- At this point a demonstration Group Reunion may be held.)

#### V. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GROUP

- A. Three to five people is the ideal size.
- B. Regularity. Weekly is ideal.
- C. Seriousness. The purpose of the group is living the Christian ideal. It takes commitment and earnestness.
- D. Confidentiality. Part of the gift of being listened to is knowing that what is said stays in the room and will not be repeated.
- E. Sincerity. Authentic friendships are built on openness and truth.

#### VI. STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

- A. Honeymoon stage.
  1. Development of a bond.
  2. Relationships deepen.
  3. Commitment to each other and to the mission.
  4. Sharing spiritual gifts, growth, and love.
- B. Disillusionment stage.
  1. At this point we must adjust the ideal as we see the human frailties in group members and they see ours. This is a difficult time for the group.
  2. To get through the disillusionment stage, we must respect each other where we are. Offer mutual support and encouragement even if we do not feel like it or our feelings were hurt. (Romans 15:7)
  3. Persevere.
- C. Reality stage. This is when true community begins.
  1. Signs this is happening include:
    - a. A conscious decision to fully commit to the group.
    - b. Acceptance of criticism, anger, etc. from others in the group.
    - c. Confidence in one another develops. Walls crumble.
    - d. Be willing to sacrifice for one another.
    - e. Masks and the need for recognition are no longer necessary.
    - f. Prayer for each other increases.
    - g. Accept the roles God has given us with humility.
    - h. Recognize God working in us; we are not doing it on our own.

- i. Embody Jesus' command to love one another.
2. More time is spent in:
  - a. Prayer and meditation.
  - b. Supporting apostolic action by group members.
  - c. Committing to regular intercession for each other.
  - d. Celebrating life events in the group.
  - e. Celebrating the grace that is happening.
  - f. Following through on commitments individually and as a group.

## VII. THE GROUP AND ITS REUNION

- A. The Group is formed by the people who belong to it. It is something in and of itself.
  1. It is a group of friends who are able to give to one another because they love and trust one another.
  2. The group always exists, whether we are together or apart.
  3. The group practices and lives, "Make a friend, be a friend, bring your friend to Christ."
  4. The group is patterned on the spirit of openness and naturalness similar to the experience of your table this weekend.
  5. It will take time to find persons with whom you can build this kind of friendship and time to build true community with them.
- B. The Reunion is something that happens.
  1. The reunion makes it possible for the group:
    - a. To be formed. (exist)
    - b. To be maintained. (continue to exist)
    - c. To form and maintain a Christian spirit through a friendship which is created and strengthened by regular meetings.
  2. This is a unique friendship. Rooted in love, faith and hope, it raises friendship to the level of the divine and is an ever-present grace.
  3. The group meets in reunion because:
    - a. They are friends.
    - b. They continue to be friends.
    - c. They become closer friends because their relationship is centered in Christ.
- C. Group Reunion requires work, trust and dedication.
- D. The Group Reunion, when lived, becomes a Christian community affecting the world.
  1. To live Group Reunion is the desire to be a saint, a believer living out the Christian ideal in the world.
  2. "We do not have Group Reunion so there will be some people to attend Cursillo, but on the contrary, we have Cursillos so that there will be people to make Group Reunions." Eduardo Bonnin, the founder of the movement.  
(Option 2 -- The demonstration or model reunion may be held here.)

## VIII. ULTREYA -- THE REUNION OF THE GROUPS

- A. The origin of the word "Ultreya." (See clarification section.)

- B. Ultreya is a community that meets regularly, typically weekly or monthly.
  - 1. In an attitude of progressive Christian growth.
  - 2. United in one faith, one Lord, one baptism.
  - 3. Sharing and supporting each other to live a balanced Christian life, particularly giving us power in our witnessing to others.

#### IX. THE PURPOSE AND MISSION OF THE ULTREYA

- A. Purpose:
  - 1. To create and maintain the spirit and friendship of the local Christian community.
  - 2. To be a motivating force for all of us to live the Christian ideal and evangelize the world.
- B. Mission: To make possible the ideal of bringing Christ to the world.

#### X. FORMAT OF THE ULTREYA

- A. Prayer. Usually the “Come Holy Spirit” prayer begins the Ultreya.
- B. Music. Music may also be interspersed throughout the Ultreya.
- C. Reunion with people from other groups which makes possible:
  - 1. A broader vision.
  - 2. Finding persons with whom we want to group.
- D. Personal witness. How is God working in my life right now? Make it concrete, using examples from my life. Share one or more of the following:
  - 1. Piety. How I am deepening my relationship with God.
  - 2. Study. How I am growing in Christ.
  - 3. Apostolic action. How I am making a friend, being a friend, bringing that friend to Christ.
  - 4. Study and Evangelization of the Environment. How I am transforming my environment.
  - 5. Developing Christian Community Within Our Environments. How we are transforming our environments.
- E. Reactions to the witness by the community gathered.
- F. The Spiritual Director/Pastor:
  - 1. Reflects on the contents of the witness talk and the discussion that follows in light of the gospel.
  - 2. May serve the community Holy Communion.
  - 3. Is available to individuals at the conclusion of the Ultreya.
- G. Closing worship and/or prayer.
- H. There is often a social time before or after the Ultreya.

#### XI. CONCLUSION

- A. Living an authentic Christian life in the Church and in the world is very important.
- B. Post Via de Cristo includes Group Reunion and Ultreya. They are effective, valid tools for helping individuals live a balanced Christian life and are not an

- end in themselves.
- C. Via de Cristo encourages you to participate fully in the life of your congregation and the Church.
- D. The Via de Cristo method helps you persevere. It works!  
(Option 3. A model Group Reunion may be held after the talk.)

## **CLARIFICATION OF THE GROUP REUNION AND ULTREYA OUTLINE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. It is one thing to agree with the ideal presented in Via de Cristo and another thing to carry it out in our everyday lives.
- B. This is a review of the previous talks. It needs no further clarification.
- C. We need the Holy Spirit to be alive and working in our lives to help us persevere. We cannot do it with just our own determination.
- D. Group Reunion and Ultreya provide a proven method that enables us to persevere -- to achieve what God is calling us to be. Life in grace takes courage. God calls us to "go into all the world." Via de Cristo reminds us of this great calling. The difficult part of this is how to do it (previous talks) and how to persevere (this talk).

### **II. THE VIA DE CRISTO METHOD OF PERSEVERANCE**

- A. Spiritual Direction: meeting regularly with a pastor, trained spiritual director or mature Christian who helps you become aware of how God is working in your life and what He is calling you to do. This helps you to stay plugged into the divine power source.
- B. Group Reunion: offers a lifestyle, one in which a few Christians become a small supportive community that will lead us to love God more (piety and study) and love our neighbor more. It means sharing our lives with others who have the same desires and with whom we can share our apostolic action. We share our lives with them and receive support, encouragement and inspiration. It is a real sharing of our lives as Christian apostles -- friendship centered in Christ.
- C. Ultreya: a group for Group Reunions. The purpose of Ultreya is to strengthen and support the Group Reunions and promote mutual encouragement in apostolic action. It broadens our sharing and witnessing, providing a larger community to sustain us.

### **III. THE PURPOSE OF THE GROUP REUNION**

There are other types of groups, i.e., prayer groups, small Bible Study groups or other small groups, that can be supportive and encouraging. However, the Via de Cristo weekend puts us "on the same page." We have heard the call to be witnesses and want to follow through on this commitment.

- A. The Group Reunion is based on friendship.
  - 1. It creates a safe place conducive to Christian growth.
  - 2. We realize that we, individually and as a group, are to be the Church in the world. Since we are the Church, Christ is counting on us.

3. This commitment to share Christ begins at home and in the groups to which we belong. Our goal is to change our environments to be more Christ-like.
- B. Group Reunion is based on sharing with friends.
1. We need support and community to live our lives as Jesus wills it.
  2. We encourage each other to deepen our relationship with the Lord and grow in faith, hope and love.
  3. This type of sharing deepens the relationship in the group. Not many people understand the type of commitment we are trying to live out in our lives, but this group shares those values and the ideal of living the Christian ideal
  4. As we share successes and failures in piety, study and apostolic action, we become more aware of ourselves, how God is touching our lives and the need to witness in our environments. By verbalizing our plans for the coming week, we make a commitment and become accountable to our Group Reunion sisters and/or brothers to carry out our plans.

#### IV. THE METHOD OF THE GROUP REUNION

- A. This section shows how the purpose of the movement is fulfilled in its method of sharing and planning in small groups.
- B. This section emphasizes the three legs of the tripod and how the Group Reunion helps us stay focused and develop a balanced Christian life.
- C. Reunion Card.  
You should go more into detail in this section. The emphasis is on the spirit and thrust of the group.
  1. Invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit is always important. The Spirit brings us into God's presence and makes it possible to have an authentic Group Reunion. We do not do this in our own strength, but through God's power that comes to us through the Holy Spirit.
  2. Piety.
    - a. How have acts of personal piety -- worship, Holy Communion, personal prayer, etc.-- nourished your relationship with God this week? This is not a simple listing of what you did, but an awareness of a deepening relationship with God. It need not be limited to the list from the reunion card, although these are the more typical disciplines that nourish us. Use personal examples.
    - b. The closest moment to Christ is meant to make us increasingly aware of the presence of God in our lives. It is the moment that made us aware of God working in and through us. It is not necessarily an emotional experience. Use a personal example.
  3. Study  
What specifically in your reading or study gave you a new insight or knowledge? What made you more aware of God's will for your life, either confirming that you are on the right path or leading you in a new direction. Use at least one example.
  4. Apostolic Action  
For most of us, this is the most difficult part of the reunion card.

Deepening our relationship with God and studying, either individually or with a group, are Christian activities that support us, encourage us and make us feel safe and loved. Apostolic Action means we have to come out of our comfortable place and share with others, even non-Christians. This brings most of us out of our comfort zone. It is, however, the only way many people will ever hear the gospel.

- a. Apostolic action begins where we are. One place is within our families. Do you have children at home? Are you a grandparent? Have you nieces or nephews? What are you doing to bring these children to faith in Jesus? It does not “just happen”. It takes conscious effort. Are these children in Sunday school and/or Church? If other family members are not Christian, do you pray for them? Do you ask God to give you wisdom in knowing how to love them and when and how to witness to them?

What about neighbors, co-workers, friends? In which environment is God leading you to witness? We can't do it all at once. Are you praying for guidance? Where are you led to begin? Which of your several environments? Are there other Christians who could work together with you?

In this section you are asked to share apostolic successes. Did a child come to a deeper understanding of God's grace? Did you offer to pray for your neighbor and they opened up to you? Are you making a friend, being a friend, and making plans to bring that friend to Christ? Sometimes the first two steps of this saying take a long time. It takes patience and perseverance. Use personal examples.

- b. Our only real failure is failure to try. By reporting lost opportunities, we can be encouraged to follow through next time. Avoid creating guilt for yourself or your sisters/brothers. Even St. Paul lamented the fact that he was not able to do the things he wanted to do and did things he didn't want to do. (Romans 7:15) That includes doing or saying the wrong thing or failure to do or say the right thing. We don't like to feel vulnerable, but by sharing our failures, we can be encouraged to try again and to persevere. It takes courage to take risks, and when we take risks we sometimes fail. We often gain insight at the expense of bad judgment and mistakes. Use personal examples.
- c. Sharing your plan for piety, study and apostolic action for the next week helps you become more intentional about your growth in faith and in your witnessing. You should be realistic and not commit to too much or too little. Your group should hold you accountable to your plan. This is difficult to do, but most of us are more apt to follow through on our plans if we know we are accountable to someone.

## V. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GROUP

- A. Two people may become dependent on one another and if one person is unable to meet there is not a group. If there are more than five people in the group, there is not adequate time for each person to share deeply.

- B. Weekly is ideal. It helps us stay focused and accountable. True friendship takes time. This weekend is 72 hours. If your group met weekly for a year, you would not have as many hours together as we have had this weekend. It takes regular participation in group to build trusting, loving relationships.
- C. This does not mean without humor or joy, but with the knowledge that living a balanced Christian life takes commitment and earnestness in carrying it out. Members of the group share their Christian growth in the context of a group, and receive affirmation that what they are doing is important.
- D. Confidentiality and trust are required for us to share deeply. What is said in the group is not to be repeated to anyone without permission.
- E. Our group should be safe enough to remove our masks and be who we truly are -- to be open and honest about ourselves, warts and all. Sometimes this hurts, but we must work through this in the safety of the group.

## VI. STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

This is a further development of the concept briefly discussed in the Developing Christian Community Within Our Environments talk.

- A. Honeymoon stage has four elements.
  1. Our Christian faith unites us. Because we have the same heavenly Father, we bond as brothers and/or sisters in Christ.
  2. Our relationships deepen because of our love of God and our love, caring and concern for one another.
  3. We share ourselves and our Christian values, and we are accountable to each other in all areas of our lives. This is different from the commitment made in other groups, where we keep the remainder of our lives private.
  4. We share our spiritual gifts, our love of the Lord, our growing edges, our prayer experiences and how we experience God.

With these four elements we still have a dream and not true community. These are signs of enthusiasm and excitement. Are any of the elements missing in anyone in the group? Discussing these elements and sharing our mutual experiences solidifies the dream.

- B. Disillusion stage.

This stage is inevitable and how it is handled is crucial to the formation of true community. Many Reunion Groups fall apart at this point.

  1. Enthusiasm wanes. Members are more reluctant to share or even to take the time to meet. They want it done their way. The problems are as varied as the groups and the individuals in the group. This is the time to reevaluate the ideal individually and as a group.
  2. Give each person time to struggle with his/her self-centeredness. Respect each other's uniqueness and the time needed to embrace the ideal. Reach out to them. Be understanding. Listen with empathy. Don't abandon them to their own disillusionment. Learn to be a "wounded healer." Comfort each other about these issues and offer mutual support and encouragement even when members have hurt one another.
  3. Do not give up or let the group fall apart. Reach out to one another with love and understanding. Persevere!

C. Reality stage.

Becoming a true community is possible only when the group has successfully worked through the disillusion stage, and each person is directing his/her life to God and seeking God's will for the group. It is no longer a dream world but a community based on the reality of each other's strengths and weaknesses. We love each other in spite of it all. This takes perseverance.

VII. THE GROUP AND ITS REUNION

It takes time to develop love and trust in relationships. Because of our society's emphasis on instant gratification -- instant coffee to instant success, we expect instant Group Reunion. Only time, friendship and grace can produce a group in the Via de Cristo sense. The group is a small number of persons who have committed themselves to each other in order to share lives dedicated to Christ. The reunion is the format used by the group at a certain time and a certain place. Strangers can participate in a reunion; for example, during an Ultreya, but it is not a Group Reunion until there is an on-going commitment among the members.

A. The Group

1. Friendship is the most important element of the group, and without it there is no group. It is friendship dedicated to the Lord's service. It seeks the Lord's presence. We are united and intertwined by sharing God's word. By grace this love overflows into places (environments) touched by each person's life. God's presence is felt.
2. The love and support from the group is constant and is felt even when the group is apart.
3. The group reaches out to others in friendship and shares Christ with them.
4. Christian community felt at the table on the weekend is a taste of the Group Reunion experience.
5. Give the group time to form. You may need to try more than one group to find people with whom you are comfortable. Remember the stages of group formation. Persevere!

B. The Reunion

1. The reunion is the structure that enables the group to form, exist, and persevere. It provides a process to share with others about our relationship with Christ, the commitments we have made and our attempts to direct our lives for Christ.
2. Because of the commitment of the group members to live a grace-filled life, these friendships are unique.
3. These commitments to God and to each other are the glue that creates the special bonds in these groups, holds the group together and brings them ever closer.

C. Group Reunion requires work and dedication. Sometimes personalities or schedules clash. You may need to try several groups to find what you need, but group changes should be given prayerful consideration.

D. The Group Reunion, when lived, becomes a Christian community affecting the



world.

1. It helps us persevere in our desire to live out our faith in the world.
2. Group Reunion is the heart of the Via de Cristo method of bringing Christ to the world. An important goal of the weekend is to prepare people to participate in a Group Reunion.

### VIII. Ultreya

- A. Definition. Cursillo originated on the island of Mallorca in Spain following the Spanish Civil War. This was a time of unrest in the Spanish Church, a time of decreasing influence of the church on society. The idea was to have a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James the Apostle, providing a time for the young men (and later women) to dedicate themselves to renewal of the church in society. It was a difficult climb in mountainous terrain to the shrine. The pilgrims encouraged each other as they persevered in the journey by crying joyfully to each other "Ultreya!" or Onward! as an encouragement to each other. This term was adapted to mean a gathering of pilgrims -- a gathering that would encourage them in their journey of faith.
- B. Just as your evening sharing of discussion and posters have expanded our table community to include the entire Rollo Room, the Ultreya expands your Group Reunion to include several other groups from your geographic region.
- C. Originally Ultreya met weekly, and there are a few places where this still happens. It is more typical for the Via de Cristo Ultreya to meet monthly.
- D. Ultreya is a community of Christians who are also attempting to dedicate their lives to Jesus. It is meant to be an encouragement to persevere in faith, pursuing the Christian ideal of leading a balanced Christian life of piety, study and apostolic action and bringing Christ to the world. This broader community gives us power to witness to others.

### IX. PURPOSE AND MISSION OF ULTREYA

The atmosphere of the Ultreya should be encouraging. Group Reunion is not meant to exist in a vacuum. Just as "An isolated Christian is a paralyzed Christian," Group Reunions that do not get support and encouragement from the Ultreya tend to grow inward and lose the focus of the group. The group becomes an end in itself. Each Group Reunion comes back to the Ultreya to nourish and be nourished by other groups. Ultreya is for the group what the group is to the individual. It helps develop Christian community.

- A. Ultreya keeps us and our groups focused on living a balanced Christian life of piety, study and apostolic action. It encourages us in the areas in which we need to grow and persevere. It provides additional support as we reach out with God's love to evangelize our environments.
- B. Methods of perseverance for both the individual and the Group Reunions are built into the Ultreya, and the Ultreya becomes a Christian community. We need both our Group Reunion and Ultreya.

### X. FORMAT OF THE ULTREYA

Ultreya combines songs, prayer, sharing and witness in an atmosphere of joy and openness. This atmosphere and the content of the Ultreya build and support the individual

groups by broadening the member's experience and horizons. It helps us grow at our own pace, but at a rate that is not often possible in other groups.

- A. Begin with prayer. Usually the prayer of the Holy Spirit opens each Ultreya.
- B. Music. Singing brings the group together and creates a mood of joy and worship.
- C. Reunion.
  - 1. The reunion segment is similar to the format of the permanent Group Reunions, but usually with different people each time. This mixing of people helps us to expand, broaden our outlook and the gain knowledge of other Christian activity in our area. We learn from each other. The sharing is not as deep and personal as the sharing in the individual Group Reunions because the level of trust has not been developed, but that does not make the Group Reunions at Ultreya invalid.
  - 2. Ultreya is also a place for people to find a Group Reunion if they do not have a group to welcome them after a weekend or if they need to find another group.
- D. Personal Witness
 

The person giving the witness shares his/her own piety, study, apostolic action, or his/her efforts to transform an environment by building Christian community. In other words, how Christ is working in his/her life right now. S/he can go into more detail than is possible during reunion time. We learn from this sharing. It may open up methods, plans, and concerns that we can use in our own lives. We may get new insights or be exposed to new ways of thinking and doing.

Many people become newly aware of the influences of others on them, and the influence they have had on others. Because of the variety of the witnesses given at the Ultreyas, new vistas and possibilities in serving the Lord are opened. The priesthood of all believers becomes clearer, as does the ideal of living in community with God and each other.
- E. There is discussion on the topic, a time for the community to respond to the witness talk.
- F. Spiritual Direction
  - 1. A spiritual director summarizes the witness talk and the community sharing which follows in the light of the gospel. A pastor usually does this. If none is present, a mature Christian in the group can do it.
  - 2. The pastor may have a short meditation and celebrate Communion.
  - 3. The spiritual director is also available for personal contact during the Ultreya, as s/he is on a weekend, especially during reunion time or after the Ultreya.
- G. Closing prayer or worship. This can be done in many different ways.
- H. It is optional, but a social time often precedes or follows.

## XI. CONCLUSION

- A. God calls us to lead an authentic Christian life at all times and in all places.
- B. Group Reunion and Ultreya support and encourage us to lead this balanced Christian life. They are tools proven to be effective aids in living a God-filled

- life. They are not ends in and of themselves.
- C. Via de Cristo encourages us to continue to be active in the life of our congregation. This is one of our environments, and we are called to be leaders in bringing others to know Christ and grow in faith.
  - D. The Via de Cristo method is effective. Use it!

### WRITE-DOWNS FOR Group Reunion AND Ultreya

The Via De Cristo method of perseverance:

1. Spiritual direction
2. Group Reunion
3. Ultreya

Words not in outline (Spiritual Direction is meeting regularly with a trained spiritual director who helps you become aware of how God is working in your life and what He is

calling you to do.)

Group Reunion is sharing our Christian faith among friends.

Method of Group Reunion

1. Share our piety, study and apostolic action in the previous week.
2. Share our plan for integrating piety, study and apostolic action into our lives in the coming week.
3. Depend on the group for encouragement, strength and accountability for carrying out our plan.

Characteristics of the group.

1. Size
2. Regularity
3. Seriousness
4. Confidentiality
5. Sincerity

Stages of Group Development

1. Honeymoon stage
2. Disillusionment stage
3. Reality stage

Group Reunion requires work, trust and dedication.

Group Reunion, when lived, becomes a Christian community affecting the world.

Ultreya—The Reunion of the Groups.

## **THE FOURTH DAY**

Recommended time: 10-15 minutes

### **I. Orientation**

The final talk of the weekend is a personal testimony of someone who is living the Via de Cristo method. It is a witness of the speaker's life following his/her Via de Cristo weekend and shows the importance of perseverance through Group Reunion and Ultreya. No new material is presented, but the participants see, through personal witness, that they too can persevere in the weeks and years to come. It is important for all of us to maintain our dedication to Christ, to grow spiritually and to become more effective in our apostolic action as outlined on the reunion card. The previous talk presented Group Reunion and Ultreya as the concrete means to persevere in the life of grace.

The main points of this talk are:

- 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.

### **II. General Comments**

Two things remain to be done. First is to stress the importance of the final lessons of the Via de Cristo which were presented in the Group Reunion and Ultreya talk. These concepts are new, yet they are the keys to living out the ideal presented throughout the weekend. It makes the participant realize that in order to persevere, it is necessary to have an on-going relationship with Christ and on-going relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Second, the talk presents the importance of perseverance. Until now, the talks have been realistic enough in considering problems, but the focus has been on sketching out a positive program. We now honestly face the problem that some people don't persevere in Christ's service. It is important to discuss this as well as to give some direction in how to handle it. They will then be prepared for their own struggles and gain some understanding of those who do not persevere.

Along with Developing Christian Community Within Our Environments and Group Reunion and Ultreya, the Fourth Day talk shows what is meant by "on-going relationships with your sisters and brothers in Christ." Beginning with the Developing Christian Community Within Our Environments talk, Via de Cristo becomes concerned with Christian relationships leading to effective apostolic action. Christian community is centered on the idea of teamwork. Christians working together can accomplish much more than if they worked in isolation. It gives the participants the desire for on-going contact with other dedicated Christians. The Group Reunion and Ultreya talk sketches the "how" of maintaining this contact, Group Reunion and Ultreya. The Fourth Day talk concludes the talks by considering some of the dangers and stressing the Via de Cristo method as a means to persevere.

### III. Atmosphere

This talk is both sober and enthusiastic. It considers some real problems and difficulties in an open, honest way. It is enthusiastic because of the central truth that “Jesus Christ and I are a majority.” It is a personal testimony of someone who has come through the difficulties and has seen Christ at work. The stage was set in the Developing Christian Community Within Our Environments talk to send the participants back into a hostile world with a desire to evangelize their environments. The Group Reunion and Ultreya talk has given them some new tools for accomplishing the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) and a way to hold onto the joy they may be feeling at this point in the weekend. Now is the time to provide a strong witness of the effectiveness of the Via de Cristo method.

The participants don’t need wordy, philosophical pronouncements. What they DO need is enough insight into the Via de Cristo method to see that it can truly work for them.

### IV. Suggestions for Writing this Talk.

The Fourth Day is primarily a witness talk. It presents a person who attended a Via de Cristo weekend, dedicated or rededicated his/her life more fully to Christ and has seen the results of that commitment. The speaker should share what s/he has seen God do in bringing others to Christ. It does not explain but inspires.

This talk is both realistic and enthusiastic. It considers realistically that everything is not rosy after Via de Cristo. There should be some discussion indicating that all former participants did not persevere, so they know it can happen to them or others. This should be done in a general manner without revealing anyone’s identity. If the talk is realistic, participants will face the fact that perseverance is not automatic but takes much concentrated effort.

The talk should enthusiastically convince participants that it is possible to persevere and be effective apostles. The tone of the whole talk should be one of confidence--confidence in Christ and what he will do through us. The talk should contain stories of apostolic successes of the speaker and other Cursillistas. It should especially contain the kind of stories that show how participants have returned to environments, how they persevered at working patiently over a period of time, and how they are seeing results. The stories do not have to be spectacular. They should show that results are possible.

In stressing the need for perseverance, the speaker should be specific. Perseverance involves prayer, spiritual direction, and participating in Group Reunions and Ultreya. A participant will not persevere if s/he does not work at becoming a dedicated Christian leader. The speaker has to stress the importance of these concrete means of perseverance.

The force of the talk will come from the speaker’s confidence in the value of the Via de Cristo message in his/her own life. S/he transmits the conviction that Christ does work in us and through us. If we are faithful, we will see results. This will do a great deal to encourage the participant to give enough of his/her own idealism, dedication and spirit of love to let God work in his/her life.

## THE FOURTH DAY OUTLINE

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. On the first day we asked for your idealism, self-surrender and a spirit of charity. God has been present and has poured his grace on you.
- B. Many people, without even knowing you, prayed for you this weekend, and their prayers have been answered.
- C. Grace is a gift from God.

### II. YOUR MISSION

- A. While you may have changed this weekend, your environment remains the same. It may be cold, lonely, hostile or indifferent when you return to it.
- B. You have responded to Christ's call, and in following this call, you will bring others with you--those who do not know Him, and those who think they know Him but don't know Him well.
- C. Your head has been filled with ideas, your heart with fire, ideas and fire that you feel compelled to communicate to your sisters and brothers until all are brought to Christ! Like the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, you want this experience to last, to stay on the mountaintop. (Luke 9:28-43)

### III. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility is being accountable for something.

- A. The Lord called you to this Via de Cristo weekend and entrusted you with the mission to witness and to win friends for Christ.
- B. The world is not lost because there are too many unbelievers but because too few Christians live and act like Christians.

### IV. DANGERS ENCOUNTERED IN THE FOURTH DAY

- A. Over-confidence. Believing you are something.
  - 1. By feeling deeply about the mission that you heard this weekend, you may come to think that you are important and irreplaceable, that you are doing "good works" or accomplishing things.
  - 2. You must not forget that you are only an instrument in God's hands. It is humility that makes you an effective instrument. As long as you know this, God can accomplish His goals through you.
- B. Lack of confidence. Believing you are nothing.
  - 1. If you feel that you failed in your first attempts at talking to others about Christ, you may become discouraged and feel you can do nothing. Jesus and the disciples did not succeed with everyone they talked to either. The only failure is the failure to try.
  - 2. We are nothing, but with Christ, we are everything.  
"Jesus and I are an overwhelming majority!"
- C. False Christianity. Believing that doing "Christian things" makes us Christian.

## V. SOLUTIONS TO AVOID THESE DANGERS

### A. On-going relationship with Jesus.

Prayer, God's word and the sacraments give us strength. We live in grace in an intentional way, growing and sharing with others. (John. 15:5)

### B. On-going relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Group Reunion and Ultreya are good ways to do this. Living in Christian community with others who share the same goals and ideal stimulate us in our apostolic action, sustain us in moments of hesitation, raise us when we fall, and keep alive the spirit of love. Two friends are stronger than one. (Matthew 18:20, Hebrews 10:24-25)

The speaker should witness how s/he has accepted the responsibility of changing an environment by maintaining a personal relationship with Christ and relationships with his/her brothers/sisters in Christ.

## VI. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE

A. Persevering in Christ's cause, continuing His work, using His methods, and leaning on Him to continue His work. Build on the cornerstone of Christ living and working in us through grace. If we don't, everything will topple when obstacles arise.

B. Use the example of Christ to show what we must become. He had a small group of loyal followers who, at the hour of trial, became smaller and smaller. There was a larger group that followed at a safe distance, and an even greater group that fluctuated according to circumstances. Because Jesus understands what it is to live with temptation, He can sustain and equip us for the struggles we will encounter. He also experienced rejection by many people. He understands what we face and will be there with us. (John 15:20)

## VII. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD HAVE

A. A clear concept of the ideal -- know what it is.

B. A clear concept of reality -- know what God's ideal is.

## VIII. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW

A. We have different gifts. God calls us to do different apostolic work. We can and must do something, but we should not measure ourselves against what others are doing. Everyone should feel responsibility, but not all will feel it in the same way. (I Corinthians 12)

B. We will experience prejudice and misunderstanding. If we keep our eyes on Christ, we can grow through these experiences.

C. We live in God's grace, fully using the gifts we have been given in the environments in which we are.

D. We must retain the true concept of piety, directing our whole life to God.

## IX. LIFE IS A PERENNIAL VIA DE CRISTO

A. Live what we found here this weekend. If the power of the Spirit is the leaven in every environment, it will give a Christian tone and life to all society. Wow!



This optimism, this joy, this triumphal concept of Christianity and the Church that we are feeling now will extend and spread to all environments. These ideas will be brought to life and will help bring life to all.

- B. Our lives will be transformed to what they should be--Christian life deeply felt, lived and shared.

## **CLARIFICATION OF THE FOURTH DAY OUTLINE**

Fourth Day is a loosely structured talk centering on the idea of perseverance. After a short introduction, it considers what the participant is to do by reviewing the message of the action talks. (The Lay Person as the Church in the World, Apostolic Action, and The Study and Evangelization of the Environment) Then it considers two of the main dangers facing the participants when they return home and develops the solutions: an on-going relationship with Jesus and on-going relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the heart of the talk. Next it presents what the participant should be and discusses the problem of opposition. Finally, it develops some of the common mistakes that a participant could make, ending with a view of what the future could be if the participants persevere.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The introduction does not need development. The Holy Spirit guides each weekend, and if the participants opened their hearts, they have experienced grace. They are reminded of two things:

- A. They were asked to give their own idealism, self-surrender and a spirit of charity (love).
- B. Other people have been praying for them. The prayers and palanca of other people were important in what happened during the weekend
- C. Nothing could have happened if the participants had not sufficiently given themselves to what was happening. Grace is a gift from God, something he wants to give to each of us.

### **II. YOUR MISSION**

- A. At this point the participants need to be reminded that they have changed and their environments have not. They are going back to the same families, friends, co-workers, etc. and they need to be ready for that. This section is a short summary of the message of the Study and Evangelization of the Environment talk. Each participant should work in his/her environment to bring others to Christ. Almost without realizing it, a change has come over the participants. When they return home, their families, neighborhoods, congregations and work environments will seem different. They may perceive that people seem ready to turn on them, or, worse yet, be apathetic. The participants need to be reminded that **they** have changed. An enormous challenge awaits them as they try to

change their environments to match their ideal.

The following sections are good places to share some experiences of how Christ worked through people to change some environments and to bring people to Himself.

- B. A clear statement of the central focus of the Via de Cristo is bringing others to Christ. Reference could be made to The Layperson as the Church in the World talk (We are the church.) and the Apostolic Action talk (Make a friend, be a friend, bring that friend to Christ.)
- C. It is traditional, both in the United States and Spain, to use the story of the Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-43) at this point to compare the way the participants feel to the way the apostles felt. They saw Jesus transfigured on Mt. Tabor along with Moses and Elijah. The temptation was to want to stay there, just enjoying the glorious experience. But they had to leave and do the work that God had planned for them to do. In the same way, the participants have to leave the special Christian community that formed this weekend. This disappointment is usually mixed with a sense of urgency to be about the task of evangelizing.

### III. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Participants are being sent into the world as apostles. This section emphasizes the enormity of the responsibility involved in this mission.

- A. As apostles we feel our responsibility strongly because we have an invaluable gift. It is the pearl of great value, worth selling everything to possess. (Matthew 13:46) We are dealing with something that could be a matter of eternal life and death. We have received something that entails a great obligation.
- B. Many people feel Christianity is a losing cause. The biggest obstacle is internal, not external. There are too few Christians who take their responsibility as apostles seriously. The world is non-Christian by default. We need to do something about that.

### IV. DANGERS ENCOUNTERED ON THE FOURTH DAY

This section begins to consider the question of perseverance. There are two main dangers that are a problem to a great number of participants. They are closely related, and the answer to them is the same. The following section provides the answer.

The two main dangers are attitudes that have already been dealt with in the grace talks. It should have been made clear that: 1) nothing good can be done without Christ and 2) with Christ all things are possible. This summary prepares the way for presenting the concrete means of dealing with these dangers: an on-going relationship with Jesus and on-going relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

- A. Over-confidence. Believing you are something.
  - 1. Some participants believing they are someone special, more important than others, because they participated in a Via de Cristo weekend. Via de Cristo can be so successful in giving the participant a sense of his/her worth as a Christian and an apostle that it causes him/her to value the Via de Cristo

movement itself instead of valuing his/her relationship with God. When that happens, a person can be hard to take after the weekend. They may go home and turn people off talking about the Via de Cristo weekend or make others feel that they belong to a special elite group who are the only true Christians. Because of this attitude, some participants become less effective apostles after the weekend than they were before. This section should deal with this danger emphatically, helping the participant to see the danger and avoid it. We are a special breed because we are Christians, not because we attended a Via de Cristo weekend. The purpose of the Via de Cristo method is to support Christians who are loyal, active members of the Church. The participant should act like one Christian among others. S/he should not constantly be making it seem that s/he is a member of a special group at home, at work, in the congregation, or in an apostolic organization.

2. We are useless instruments when left to our own devices. The antidote to this over-confidence is humility. Humility is the realization that all good comes from God, and we are nothing apart from Him. It is not our desire to call attention to ourselves or seek personal glory. Christians should not only be humble about themselves, but also realize it is Christ working through them. We should also be humble about the Via de Cristo movement. It is not for everyone.

B. Under-confidence. Believing you are a nobody.

1. In the attempt to witness, you may become discouraged and allow your dreams of being a witness for the Lord to crumble. You may believe you cannot do anything to cure the problem. The danger is that you will lose confidence when you do not experience immediate and continuing success. Some will see success quickly, while others will not see much success for awhile. Even if you see success right away, you may go through periods of reverses and difficulties later. You may be discouraged by the fact that in your environments, non-Christians do not seem to be open to Christianity. New participants commonly feel that all they should have to do is tell people about Jesus and they will believe. For some people this is the case, but for most it is a long process. We can learn from our failed attempts, but if we do not try at all, our environments would not be changed for sure. Other participants will be much more discouraged by the state of the church. They expect other Christians to respond to what they have learned and experienced on the weekend. Instead they discover many Christians are indifferent, including some supposed "good Christians," even some pastors and church leaders. They also find other "Christians" who do not believe at all. This realization may cause the participants to become disillusioned and discouraged, perhaps even bitter. The speaker will have to warn the participants about the shock of this clash between what they have learned about the Christian ideal and the reality of their old environment. Briefly share a couple of short stories of people who went through this difficulty.
2. We are nothing, but with Christ we are everything. We learned that Christ and I are a majority. There is a false humility that claims to be nothing. It is

actually fear or insecurity masquerading as humility. With Christ we have full confidence that we can be effective witnesses. We may not have immediate results. Jesus didn't either. He rarely works through us without our cooperation. Jesus may test us, but we can count on Him.

- C. False Christianity. This was discussed in the Piety and Apostolic Action talks. Doing Christian acts makes people think they are Christians. Many church members fall into this category. Hopefully, the participants have had a genuine experience with Jesus and recognize the shallowness of this life-style. It is not necessarily that the action changes, but there has been a change of heart and the motivation has changed.

## V. SOLUTIONS TO AVOID THESE DANGERS

The solutions: An on-going relationship with Christ and on-going relationships with our sisters and brothers in Christ will give us both humility and confidence as apostles. This section summarizes the Life in Grace and Group Reunion and Ultreya talks.

- A. On-going contact with Jesus through living a life in grace. "Without me, you can do nothing." (John 15:5) The most important thing to do to be successful apostles is to stay in close contact with Jesus. If you don't, you won't grow in faith or in the ability to witness your faith to others. Ways to develop your relationship with Jesus include prayer, worship and the sacraments. The speaker should share some of his/her acts of piety from the Group Reunion card as ways to maintain a friendship with Jesus. Spiritual direction, study and staying in contact with Christian leaders seem like indirect ways of maintaining contact with Jesus, but He works in these ways to deepen our friendship with Him. You do not have to explain things in this section, but emphasize them and give personal testimony to their importance.
- B. On-going relationship with our Christian brothers and sisters means keeping in contact with dedicated Christian apostles. It is difficult for us to persevere alone. We need the support of others who want the same thing we want and who are also striving for it. We are much stronger as a team than we are trying to survive by ourselves. An isolated Christian is a paralyzed Christian. This contact is assured with Group Reunion and Ultreya. They open new apostolic horizons, encourage us in our evangelizing, support us in moments of hesitancy, pick us up after a fall, accept in us the spirit of love and encourage us to use our gifts effectively in spreading God's kingdom. They help uncover all of our potential. Participants need to hear what Group Reunion and Ultreya can do for them. They need another impetus to take part in these activities. This section should encourage them to value the Group Reunion and the Ultreya.

This would be a good place to talk about your own experiences with Group Reunion and Ultreya, especially going back to the stages of group development and how that played out in your Group Reunion experiences.

## VI. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE

This section sketches the kind of person the participant should be: an active apostle, someone who works in a dedicated way for Christ, being a witness for Him, and continuing His work using His methods.

- A. Even though this is the shortest part of the section, it is the one that should get the greatest development. The participant should be a witness for Christ and continue His work. If the participant does not understand what s/he should be, the Via de Cristo has been a failure. This section should be an exhortation to really follow Christ and work for Him.

A success story of leading someone to Christ or changing an environment would be appropriate here.

- B. Don't be surprised when the same thing happens to us that happened to Jesus. A small group of totally dedicated followers grew smaller when the moment of truth arrived. A large group followed at a safe distance, and an even larger group vacillated ("hosanna" or "crucify him") according to the circumstances. The scribes and Pharisees tried to trip Him up "tearing their garments" in false indignation while cynically asking for miracles.

Jesus said to His disciples before he died, "Remember the words that I spoke to you, 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also; if they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also." (John 15:20) If the participants really follow Christ and work for Him, they can expect to receive the same treatment Jesus did. There will be some who will be totally dedicated to Christ, yet some of these will fall away when real difficulties come. There will be those who will go along as long as it is safe. There will be an even larger number who will be hot and cold, sometimes enthusiastically for Him and sometimes against Him, depending on the circumstances. Finally, there will be those who from the beginning will be lying in wait for Him. The participants need to know that when they come out in the open for Christ, they can expect mixed reactions from others. They can expect to have difficulties, to encounter people who are disloyal, even underhanded. Through it all, Jesus is there with us, loving us, encouraging us, and supporting us. We just need to be in relationship with Him in order to receive what he has to give us.

Relate an experience that would help make the point.

## VII. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD HAVE

- A. A clear concept of the ideal -- knowing what it is. Only fools sacrifice themselves for an unknown cause. Our ideal is great, sure and attainable! God wills it! We are called to be fishers of wo/men. We have been taught by the Master.
- B. A clear concept of reality. Often we try to fool ourselves and substitute our own will, whims and conveniences for the will of the Father. Sometimes we fool ourselves into believing we are fulfilling the will of God when we clearly are not. Do we run ahead of the Lord and say, "This is what you wanted me to do, isn't it Father?" Only by staying in relationship with God can we know His will for us. Remember Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father."

(Matthew 7:21)

#### VIII. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW

This section contains a few final admonitions to help avoid making some of the classic mistakes.

- A. Not everyone has the same spiritual gifts or the same apostolic capabilities. We are not all able to do everything, but each of us can do something. Everyone must be aware of his/her responsibility, but not all will feel it in the same way. One of the most common problems is the tendency to think that everyone should do the same thing. Some people's circumstances do not leave them as free to do things that others do. People's abilities point them in different directions. Participants should be open to all the different ways and places individual Christians can witness. Paul's teaching about the body of Christ in I Corinthians 12 is helpful. The body has a variety of parts and each part has a different function. All are indispensable, and one is as important as the other. Each part of the body must respect and care for the others.
- B. Christians will experience prejudice and lack of understanding. After all, we are not greater than the Master. Participants should not leave the weekend expecting an easy time. They should be prepared to encounter people who are prejudiced against Via de Cristo or Christianity. Don't be surprised to find you are misunderstood. The same thing happened to Jesus.
- C. We are to live in God's grace, fully using all of our natural talents and spiritual gifts to further the Kingdom. We are to be people of our times. We are asked to remember that there is something eternal in each of us. The consciousness of our life in grace and our destiny should be a source of joy and optimism.
- D. We must retain the true concept of piety. Authentic piety expands life to its fullest. Some people came to Via de Cristo with a negative, legalistic approach to Christianity. They thought that Christianity was primarily a set of dos and don'ts that limited them. At this point most of the participants want to live as Christians although they may not fully understand what that means. The solution to the limited concepts of Christian living is our relationship with Jesus and our relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. As we persevere in the Via de Cristo method, our relationship with Christ and our apostolic action become more and more important in our lives. We will find ourselves naturally changing our life style to be more Christ-like.

#### IX. LIFE IS A PERENNIAL VIA DE CRISTO

- A. Living the Via de Cristo experience in our environments is living a triumphant Christianity, believing that "Jesus and I are a majority." We appreciate the victory that is ours in Christ. In each environment we are to be effective leaven that gives the group life and vitality. Take these ideas into the world to bring all people to life and able to live up to their true potential.
- B. We are the leaven, permeating and transforming the environment. Christians should be in all parts of society, in every environment, changing the world. Participants should take the ideas they found this weekend into their everyday lives. If all Christians were leaven in their environments, Christianity would

become what it was meant to be: Christian life deeply felt, lived in daily life and spread with love. It would be dynamic and attractive. It would fulfill the deepest needs of individual Christians as well as give them the courage and ability to transform their world for Christ.