



Via de Cristo of Ohio Newsletter
Affiliated with the National Lutheran Secretariat

De Colores!

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November 17, 2011

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

So another year has come and is almost gone. We have made changes – have you noticed? We are currently trying to make changes to the website. Have you noticed the newsletter comes more frequently? Have you taken some time to read it? Have you noticed the donation page in previous issues? What do you like/dislike? We welcome your suggestions and comments. We have no way of telling what you like if you don't tell us.

Several months ago, we decided that we would only offer four weekends a year. I am surprised at the number of people who asked me about the fall weekends, to find out they didn't exist this year. Next year, there will only be spring and falls weekends – no summer weekends. We just do not have enough pilgrims to warrant six weekends a year. We are also looking into other retreat centers because of the amount of work and cost of the St. Leonard's Retreat center. Everything must be brought there: room dividers, tables, banners, chairs, kitchen items, supplies etc. The facility is bare bones until the community of St. Stephen's, with the help of some others, brings all these items out of storage for us to use.

If you have changed/deleted your home phone number, changed your address or your e-mail address, please let Christy Brill know. She is our new archivist and working on our roster. Also please let Nancy Martin know. She is our newsletter editor. So many of you have moved; some of you have updated your information, but others of you have not. We cannot invite you to be on a Weekend Team or to any of our doings if we don't have your current information.

Please read our newsletter. There is time and money spent writing the articles, typing, putting it together and mailing, BUT more importantly, this is really our only way to reach you with current information on what is happening. You can always check the web site for the current newsletter.

In January at our Annual Meeting, we will be voting on the elected positions of Secretary and Lay Director. Your vote counts and is needed. Our hope is that you will come and join us for worship, singing, a speaker, fellowship, food and voting at the Annual Meeting on January 28 at Messiah Lutheran in Reynoldsburg. We'll need musicians – all are welcome and none will be turned away. (A mailing will be out no later than mid January for you to vote if you cannot make the annual meeting.)

At this time, we plan that all of our closings for Weekends in 2012 will be held at Messiah Lutheran in Reynoldsburg. This has been arranged by Jim Wilson. There is plenty of parking.

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PLEASE NOTE: If you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to call any Secretariat member. Also, anyone from the community is welcome to attend Secretariat meetings.

Via de Cristo of Ohio
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As I continue to study Acts, I am reminding of the struggles of the early church which really are the struggles of the church today. We continue to ask for your prayers. On Secretariat, Jeff Albrektson has resigned as the Palanca Chairperson. His enthusiasm for the work of the Lord will be missed. We hope to have a replacement soon. Ask God whom you are to ask to a weekend! Remember, this is the task for all of us, not just the team. We cannot put on weekends without the pilgrims whom God wants YOU to ask.

In our Sunday school at St. Paul, I had read and watched the video of a very interesting book, When Christians Get it Wrong. It is a book based on young people leaving the church – not just any church but all churches. It is a very interesting book and one worth the read. Pastor Adam Hamilton had much to say and lots to think and pray about. Consider it for your own reading or for your group to use.

Cathy Doering
Lay Director

UPCOMING VIA de CRISTO EVENTS

Via de Cristo Annual Meeting	January 28, 2012	Messiah Lutheran Church Reynoldsburg, OH		
Leader's School	Saturday February 18, 2012	Living Word Lutheran Church		
<p>Leader's School Saturday, February 18, 2012 Living Word Lutheran Church 7539 Dustin Rd. , Galena, Ohio</p> <p>The first Leader's School for 2012 will be held on Saturday, February 18 at Living Word from 9 AM - 3 PM. Please begin to pray about attending this day school for preparation to be called to be on a Via de Cristo Team. More information and registration form will be available in the January Newsletter.</p> <p>Have any questions? Please email Jane Koch at jekoch@neo.rr.com.</p>				
Event	Scheduled Date	Location	4 Week Cut-Off Date	2 Week Cutoff Date
Men's #70	April 19-22, 2012	Holy Cross Cursillo Center Columbus, Ohio	March 22, 2012	April 5, 2012
Men's #71	October 11-14, 2012	Holy Cross Cursillo Center Columbus, Ohio	September 13, 2012	September 27, 2012
Women's #73	May 17-20, 2012	Holy Cross Cursillo Center Columbus, Ohio	April 29, 2012	May 3, 2012
Women's # 74	November 15- 18, 2012	Holy Cross Cursillo Center Columbus, Ohio	October 18, 2012	November1, 2012

EIGHT WITNESS POINTS BASED ON MY 32 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR WITH VIA DE CRISTO (CURSILLO)

By Pastor Al Sager

[During the recent 2011 National Lutheran Secretariat Annual Meeting, then-President Tracy Schmidlin invited me to join with Wayne Ford and Leona Fox (present from the 1990-91 NLS Executive Team) to share some reflections on VdC at the Saturday evening 30th Anniversary festive event. I quickly jotted some notes on the back of an envelope (as it were). When later asked to furnish a copy of what I had said, I needed to clarify that I had somewhat ad-libbed from my notes and in some instances failed to say what I had previously noted! So what follows is not a verbatim from a manuscript, but an effort to piece together an approximation of what I said or at least intended to say.]

1. Though not life-changing for all, VdC (as I've experienced it) reliably produces more dramatic life-giving, frequent life-changing, and, at times, vocation-altering dynamics than any other renewal movement I know of on the American church scene today. When I share this observation in other settings, I frequently add: if you know of a renewal movement producing more laudable results than that, please, please tell me about it. In the meantime, why don't you join me in stewardship of this beautiful gift of God to the church for the sake of the world?
2. Most Cursillistas in my experience have significantly improved their previous connection of the "head" and "heart" dimensions of Christianity. That fourteen-or-so-inch merger is oh so vital. In the Gospel of John (1:14), Jesus is said to be "full of grace and truth." I hear that as a reference to heart and head, even as our "Come Holy Spirit" prayer refers to both. Grace without truth can be mushy sentimentality – spineless tolerance of all things. Truth without grace can become legalistic, harshly prescriptive, and narrowly bound to traditions and biases. Jesus kept the two – grace and truth – together in dynamic synthesis. VdC folks know that, together, head and heart are gifts of God to renew the face of the earth.
3. According to the witness of many, many pastors, following most Cursillistas' weekends, those weekend attendees are both more *willing* and *better prepared* to serve in and through the local parish church. That is a most significant witness.
4. Most Cursillistas have learned and witness to the truth that being a disciple who follows Jesus necessarily means becoming also an apostle sent by Jesus. To do what? To partner with Him in reclaiming a broken world – that is, to renew the face of the earth. How do you do this? By impacting your environments with the grace and truth of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, one person at a time.
5. As I've observed, most Cursillistas who remain faithful in a Reunion Group, regularly attend Ultreyas, and serve on more than several teams develop leadership capacities that are admirable indeed. Few congregations have leadership development programs in place. Here again, VdC assists in a major way to bless the local church.
6. VdC represents a highly visible ecumenical expression of the church. As an example, in the locale of which I am a part, we have recently had as many as eight different faith expressions

represented on a single weekend. Such ecumenical expressions are generally not elsewhere replicated to that extent today. I am confident that such coming together of various faith expressions makes God smile, and gives us a foretaste of heaven's inclusiveness.

7. Two power sources fuel VdC mightily. First are the prayer warriors. Where else in the church is so much knee-mail in evidence? You simply cannot explain the effects of VdC if you ignore or discount the lift provided by the wings of prayer. Second as a power source are the palanca providers who are best described as sacrificial servants. (I realize that in our "definitions of essentials," palanca is described as "deep, intentional, selfless, sacrificial prayer." I can see palanca as enacted prayer, but I can also see worthy palanca that may not qualify as prayer. Therefore, I speak of TWO VdC power sources: prayer and palanca.)

Let me quickly give you an example of palanca leverage as I got moved by it back in the Spring of 1979, for our very first Ohio weekend. Brothers came to central Ohio to provide our first weekend from as far away as southern Florida, at their own expense. The lead Spiritual Director for that weekend was Whitey Schmidt. He was at that time the Chairman of the Board of Theological Education for the ALC. The Scriptures say that greater love has no one than to lay down your life for your friends. Whitey didn't actually lay down his life for us, but he laid down his body for three nights on an exercise mat spread on a gymnasium floor. As assistant SD on that weekend, with my mat next to his, I didn't sleep all that well – not because of the sleep conditions, but because I simply had never before experienced sacrificial service of this sort, and kept being awed to wakefulness by what I was experiencing. It witnessed most powerfully to me, speaking even more loudly than did his marvelous rollos! I've been enrolled with VdC ever since. Don't tell me that sacrificial, prayer-infused palanca doesn't move people.

8. Finally, VdC activity puts you in splendid fellowship with a host of God's choicest persons. My partial list includes the following: Luther Pliel, Larry Llewellyn, and Bill Corkish (from my original weekend), Wayne Ford, Leona Fox, and Ellie Henning (from time together on the NLS), Carroll and Judy Lang, Ed and Sandy Simonsen, Gene Hermeier, Ron Qualley, Nate Lundgren, Peter Setzer, Doug and Kathy Burrows, Paul and Tracy Schmidlin, Jerry Straszheim, former students Doug Givan and Doug Pretorius, and reunion brothers Dean Gatton, Warren Seeley, and David Blackford. The cloud of witnesses goes on and on. You all have your varied lists of choice persons – all of them loving, sacrificing servants, visionaries who then dare to build foundations under their God-inspired dreams, persevering marathon runners, disciplined disciples, enthusiastic apostles, fourth-day cheering colleagues. Relationships count in a big way in VdC. Thank you, Jesus, that we are all sustained, encouraged, and held accountable by fellow travelers on the Way of Christ.

Pastor Al Sager (Men's #6, Atlanta, 1975)

GOD LOVES YOU AND SO DO !!!!!

Will you share with the Via de Cristo Community how God has reached into your soul? Will you tell us how He has touched you, either on you Weekend or during your Fourth Day since your Weekend? Perhaps you can tell about how He has used you to touch someone else in His name. Your story can be simple or grand. Send it to me at vdcnewsletterohio@earthlink.net or to Editor Nancy Martin, 4025 Andrews Road, Bellville, OH 44813.



Upcoming Meeting Dates in OHIO

Bellville	Sunday December 4, 6:00pm "New Vision" sings Christmas Favorites	St. Paul Lutheran Church 48 Church Street Bellville, OH 44813	Paul Martin (419) 886-4420 pnmartin1@earthlink.net
Boardman (Youngstown Area)	Held at 7:00 PM on third Saturday of odd-numbered months	Boardman United Methodist Church 6809 Market Street Boardman, OH 44512	Sue Drewette gduzbraille@sbcglobal.net
Cincinnati	Held at 7:30PM on the first Saturday of each month.	Trinity Lutheran Church 1553 Kinney Avenue Mt. Healthy, OH 45231	Kevin Hoch (513) 931-8797 khoch@cinci.rr.com
Clayton	Held at 6:30PM on the third Saturday of each month.	United Christian Church 8611 Hoke Road Clayton, OH 45315	Wes Scoates (937) 837-1683 Scoatesw@aol.com
Columbus	Tuesday November 22 7:30 pm	Messiah Lutheran Church 1200 Waggoner Rd. Reynoldsburg, OH 43685	Donna Gough (614) 948-3833 goughdonna@aol.com
Dayton	Held at 7:00PM on the second Saturday of each month.	Abiding Christ Lutheran Church 326 East Dayton-Yellow Springs Road Fairborn, OH 45324	Ann Hughes (937) 431-1087 amhughes722@sbcglobal.net
Kent	Information to be announced	Trinity Lutheran Church 600 South Water Street Kent, OH 44224	Dave Lann (330) 296-6929 vdclann@yahoo.com
Parma	Information to be announced	Divinity Lutheran Church 11877 Blossom Avenue Parma Heights, OH 44130	Loretta Cross Home (440) 842-4499 Work (440) 845-2060
Western Reserve – Seven Hills	Held at 7:00PM on the second Saturday of each month.	Seven Hills United Methodist Church 7593 Elmhurst Drive Seven Hills, OH 44131	Vince Mallen (440) 257-2235 vince.mallen@yahoo.com
Western Reserve - Mentor	Held at 7:00PM on the fourth Saturday of each month	Mentor United Methodist Church 8600 Mentor Avenue Mentor, OH 44060-5874	Vince Mallen (440) 257-2235 vince.mallen@yahoo.com

A Blessing from an Anonymous Internet Source

Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said, 'Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated with intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty.'

Then the second tree said, 'Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take Kings and queens across the waters and sail to the corners of the world. Everyone will feel safe in me because of the strength of my hull.'

Finally the third tree said, 'I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest Tree in the forest. People will see me on top of the hill and look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will always remember me.'

After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon the trees. When one came to the first tree he said, 'This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter, 'and he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.

At the second tree the woodsman said, 'This looks like a strong tree. I should be able to sell it to the shipyard.' The second tree was happy Because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship.

When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down his dreams would not come true. One of the woodsmen said, 'I don't need anything special from my tree, I'll take this one,' and he cut it down.

When the first tree arrived at the carpenters, he was made into a feed box for animals. He was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. This was not at all what he had prayed for.

The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying kings had come to an end.

The third tree was cut into large pieces, and left alone in the dark.

The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams.

Then one day, a man and woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a crib for the baby, but this manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance of this event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man, and He stood and said

'Peace' and the storm stopped. At this time, the tree knew that it had carried the King of Kings in its boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. When Sunday came, the tree came to realize that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as was possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.

The moral of this story is that when things don't seem to be going your way, always know that God has a plan for you. If you place your trust in Him, God will give you great gifts.

Each of the trees got what they wanted, just not in the way they had imagined.

We don't always know what God's plans are for us. We just know that His Ways are not our ways, but His ways are always best.

May your day be blessed. And until we meet again, may God cradle you in the palm of His hand.

Faith Story—The Face of Jesus

When I was asked to attend Women's Via de Cristo Weekend #31, I was at a point in my life where I was moving along the road with Jesus but I was not actually traveling with Him. I kept taking little side roads and coming back to the main highway. I knew that I had been "saved through grace by faith" and was involved in ministry in my congregation. I was doing what I thought that Christ wanted me to do. Notice it was what "I" thought Christ wanted me to do--not what He was calling me to do. So, when I was asked to attend, I said "Sure, this sounds like something "I" should do." (Notice that I stuff again!)

When I got to Columbus, I settled in just to enjoy this time away from a busy work schedule and take time to just relax a little. Boy, was I surprised!! The "I" in me was confronted immediately with the face of Christ. I began to notice that the more I listened to the others on the weekend, I saw Christ everywhere and in everyone. Since I was a small child I wanted to know just what Jesus looked like. There were a lot of pictures of Him, but they were all different in some way. This fact confused me until I made my weekend. I realized that the reason they are all different is that Christ lives in all of us.

I remember that I was asked to speak at the closing and I said that if I wanted to see the Face of Christ, all I had to do was look at the faces of the people in the audience. Since that time I have asked Christ to lead me in the way that He wants me to go. I look for His Face in others that I meet, and I am humbled and blessed that He has chosen me to be His face to others as well.

God Loves You and So Do I.

Jane Koch

Women's Via de Cristo #31, Table of Sarah