



The Taste

Newsletter for the
Taste of Grace VIA DE CRISTO
 Community

www.tasteofgrace.com

Fall teams being formed for Taste of Grace VDC Weekends #2

The dates are fast approaching for Taste of Grace Men's and Women's Weekend #2.

Rector Larry Herman, Rectora LaDonna Strakis and their head cha's have been very business forming teams and organizing the training schedules for the fall weekends.

September 25 - 28 are the dates for the Men's weekend and the Women's will be held October 2 - 5, 2003. Both weekends will once again be held at beautiful Camp Manitoqua in Frankfort, IL.

Tentative training dates are as follows:

- July 19 - Men & Women team trg
- Aug 2 - Men & Women team trg
- Aug 15 & 15 - Women's Team Overnight
- Aug 22 & 23 - Men's Team Overnight
- Sept. 6 - Men and Women team trg

All locations for team training are still being confirmed.

Completion of a Via de Cristo Continuing Ed class is a pre-requisite to serving on team. If you haven't had the opportunity to attend a class, now is your chance! Check out the details on page 4.

*Put on your ★ red, white & blue
 and come to our...*

Taste of Grace ★ Via de Cristo Summer Ultreya

Date: Sunday, July 13, 2003

Time: Worship 3:30 p.m.
 Potluck 5:00 p.m.

Place: Abundant Life Church
 Painfield, IL 60544
 815-254-0250

Look on page 4 for directions to church.

Bring a dish to share...beverages, plates and silverware will be provided. Babysitting will be offered during worship service.

Our Theme will be:
"In God We Trust"

"Trust in the Lord for He is good. His mercy endures forever. Ecclesiastes 3:1"

From the Lay Director

"Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all. He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

- Mark 9: 35-37

Dear Taste of Grace Via de Cristo Community,

We are already starting to form team for weekend #2. If you can't serve on team this autumn there are many other ways in which you can help.

The whole of Via de Cristo runs on prayer. Please pray for the team and the pilgrims from now until after the weekend is over. We need your prayers especially to ward off Old Nick who is always out there looking for a way in. You can pray at home, in your car or even come to the site and pray in the prayer chapel with one of the chapel chas.

In fact we would love to see you at the camp during the weekend! We always need help in the kitchen or moving chairs around and don't forget the send off, serenade and clausura too!

Don't be surprised if things are a little different this time round as we are still finding our way and will probably be tweaking things until they're just the way we want them. The only things that won't change will be a Grace-filled experience for all and the huge outpouring of love that the candidates receive from the team and the 4th Day community.

Please take part as best you are able.

God loves you all and so do I.

Simon Prior, Lay Director
Taste of Grace Via de Cristo

Prayer times available for fall weekend **72 Hour Prayer Scroll**

Prayer (palanca) is the strength of the Via de Cristo weekend. God's grace is granted to prayer and God's grace is essential in bringing the world to Jesus.

Sign up now -
call Amy Prior at: 815-8341385
or send email to: amyrior1@aol.com

*Be sure to check out our
Prayer Vigil Resource at www.tasteofgrace.com*

Ultreya following TOG #1 Weekends' Successful!

Many of the Taste of Grace Weekend #1 participants attended the Spring Ultreya held on Saturday, May 17th at Peace Lutheran Church in Morris.

Over 40 participants enjoyed food, fellowship and music as the event rejoiced in the birth of it's own "official" community. After more than a year of hosting Taste of Grace Ultreya's without any actual "Taste of Grace" alumni, it was an awesome feeling to see our seeds bloom and our community take on a new and exciting growth. The theme for the Ultreya was appropriately "Bloom where you are planted."

Donna Weaver gave the 4th day talk and everyone shared a wonderful evening!

Future Ultreya's will be held on the 2nd Sunday of each odd month (Jan., Mar., May, July, Sept., Nov.). Times will be 3:30 p.m. Worship and 5:00 Potluck.

"For even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many." - Mark 10:45

Food for Thought from our Spiritual Director

"CHILDHOOD DREAMS"

Lockport, Illinois celebrates its I&M Canal heritage every year in its annual Canal Days festivities. The centerpiece of this celebratory weekend in June is the Canal Days Parade that marches along a mile long route on downtown State Street (Rt. 171). Well, Canal Days have come and gone for 2003, but they have been pressed into the memory pages of many hearts, mine included. The congregation that I serve in Lockport, Shepherd of the Hill, had a wonderful float in this year's parade. Thanks to the loan of a flatbed truck and several talented artists, Noah's Ark sailed the high seas down State Street, and showcased our year old puppet ministry, the P.A.L.M Squad (Puppets Alive for the Lord Ministry) for a whole community to see. The parade was a first for my nine-year old granddaughter, Hannah and myself, as well. We got to ride in the parade on horseback! For me, the experience was like taking a dip into the fountain of youth. I was nine years old again, right along with my granddaughter, and grinning from ear to ear.

Riding a horse down Main Street U.S.A. in a parade was the realization of a long forgotten childhood dream. We all have them, don't we - "childhood dreams". But for the vast majority of us, somewhere along the journey to adulthood, most of those dreams get relegated to the ñno-nonsenseí part of our adult psyche. They are either discarded in the process of cleaning out our grown up emotional closets or else they are forgotten in the layers of responsibility that adulthood generates.

Think back to your own childhood. Can you recall a heartfelt dream of childhood that was never realized? An adventure still waiting to be experienced? A hero still waiting to be met? A buried treasure still waiting to be discovered?

I think that's how it's going to feel when we join the parade of saints in heaven. Ear-to-ear joy. Your most precious heart's desire realized. A joy that is unfading, unperishable, and unending.

Heaven is the greatest adventure. Jesus is the greatest hero. Eternal life is the greatest treasure awaiting discovery.

Sometimes it seems that our notion of heaven is a childhood dream, one that we feel way too grown up to think about when we become ñno nonsenseí adults. The emphasis is on the here and now, temporal reality and worldly pragmatism. We don't spend much time dwelling on heaven and the hereafter and thoughts of ultimate paradise.

But Jesus Christ has come for that very reason, to ransom us from the ñno nonsenseí clutches of death and despair (the worldly dream killing environment of sin) and prepares a place for us in his father's house in heaven.

We seem to appreciate this wonderful truth in remarkable ways when we are little children. (Jesus says that we must enter the kingdom of heaven like little children). Heaven has a place in our childhood psyche. It is familiar territory. But its landscape becomes ethereal and vague the older we get.

That is why the church on earth is here. To remind us. To remind us that we are resident aliens in this world. To remind us that our true citizenship is in heaven. And to reassure us that walking in a daily relationship with Jesus brings the greatest joy this side of heaven.

Why do we need all the reminding? Because we all love a parade. And parades are distracting. They tend to take our attention away from heaven, and off of the business of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, on this side of paradise we need the Church to be reminded that earthly parades have a way of ending. Noah's Ark must be dismantled and it gives way to the mechanical reality of the flatbed truck underneath. The street sweeper is left to clean up the candy wrappers and debris left by the parade watchers and the horses they're watching. Worldly joy has a way of dissipating. But the joy of the Lord is a delight that stays with you all the way to heaven.

God's Peace,
Pastor Kathy Flores, Spiritual Director
Taste of Grace VDC

Evangelism – Outreach

Opportunities are being scheduled to promote Taste of Grace Via de Cristo in preparation for the Fall Weekends.

In my experience, working with two other VDC Secretariats, we found that visiting pastors to explain what VDC is and what values Cursillistas can bring to the churches; getting invitations to do "temple talks" and writing & distributing stories about VDC to area newspapers, letting people know of our organization & inviting them to participate in a weekend, was a successful approach.

We have just put together a new "Taste of Grace VDC" brochure to help us spread the word. Sometimes a brochure serves as a "crutch" for a person, making them feel more comfortable and helps them with their discussion.

Taste of Grace Secretariat has selected two dynamic people to lead the Fall Weekends---Rectora La Donna Strakis and Rector Larry Herrman, both with a wealth of VDC experience. Outreach will be doing our part in recruiting Pilgrims to "walk with Christ---and La Donna or Larry" at Camp Manitoqua this fall.

(continued on page 14)

TASTE OF GRACE VIA DE CRISTO Offers 1st Continuing Ed Class

Learn more about the dynamics of a VDC weekend, hear about the history of VDC and find out about the many behind the scene roles that keep the weekend flowing.

When: Sunday, July 13, 2003
1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Where: Abundant Life Church
23145 Lincoln Hwy.
Plainfield, IL
815-254-0250

Who: Anyone who has not
Previously attended a
Continuing Ed class.

Please contact Loretta Volker, Leaders Chairperson, at 815-875-1330 or by email: rhvolker@msn.com to pre-register. Pre-registration is not required but will insure adequate supplies and handouts for all participants.

Grace given to equip the Saints (Leaders)

On July 13th Taste of Grace will offer a Continuing Education program which is open to attendance by any member of the 4th day community.

So...that means anyone who has attended a Via de Cristo, Cursillo, Walk to Emmaus or similar three day weekend would benefit from the program. Continuing Ed offers the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about how a weekend is made uniquely personal while retaining its whole group participation...and all on such a tight time schedule! The Continuing Ed session will discuss the dynamics of the weekend and you may even learn some things you didn't even know where going on while you were "experiencing God's grace." You will learn more about the history of VDC and hear from some of the Taste of Grace Secretariat members .

Any one who intends to volunteer their services and time to become team members this fall, or at some time in the future, should try to attend the July 13th program. The Taste of Grace VDC Secretariat encourage all team members to attend a Continuing Ed session prior to serving on team.

Since we will have some hand-outs for attendee's, we would like to have a rough count before the session to insure that we have enough supplies. Please contact me and let me know if you plan on attending.

The Volker phone number is: (815) 875-1330, our fax is: (815) 875-3000 and our email is: rhvolker@msn.com.

In His Name, Loretta Volker
Leaders Chairperson

DIRECTIONS TO ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH -

From our Rector

Summer has just arrived and already my thoughts have turned to fall. The pace is too fast and it is time to do as the Psalm says, "Be silent and know that I am God." Much prayer and thought has gone into preparing to call the team members to Taste of Grace Men's Team #2. As I write this letter so far I have just chosen a Head Cha and I am still asking God for guidance about the rest of the team. My brother both in terms of brother in Christ and in terms of biology has accepted the call to be Head Cha. Please lift up both Gary and myself as we go about the task of selecting and calling a team.

LaDonna and I have cleared team-meeting dates with the secretariat and we have met with them to review call procedures and recommendations. Jim Eble, rector for the fall weekend from the Living Waters community has been a joy to work with and we are trying to develop separate call lists. One of the joys of these early teams is the ecumenicalism of the teams and I give thanks to God for the diversity of talents and abundance of people willing to help. If you haven't filled out an application and would like to be on team there is still time to do so. If you can't serve on team this time please be a prayer warrior for the team and community.

Like any Via de Cristo team there is no weekend without candidates. Please pray about someone God has placed on your heart about going to a weekend and then ask that person to attend. We all know the excuses for not going, but what are the excuses for not asking someone to attend? If "God is good all the time" and our response is "all the time God is good." Then let's invite others to join us in knowing just how good God can be.

As an agriculturalist I know that God gave us summer so that we can grow and produce for the fall harvest. Pray about the seeds you have planted, nurture the seedlings, and prepare for the harvest at the end of Sept and the first of Oct.

Yours in Christ,
Larry Herrman , Rector
Taste of Grace VDC #2

From our Rectora

What season is this? I thought it was the lazy, laid-back days of summer; however, lately life has been anything but lazy and laid-back. My life seems more like a pinball machine and I'm the little balls. I'm shot out to face each day and sometimes I fall into a spot where I score BIG, then I'm knocked by a flipper or two. I might score bit a couple of more times and then the ball goes down the middle and the day is Over.

I've heard that if Satan is having no luck in tempting you, he will get into your life and give you so many good causes that you start relying on your own ability until you lose your connection with Christ. It can happen so quickly it catches you totally off guard.

This summer, God is helping me stay focused. He has placed me in a job position I was not seeking. (They called me). This summer I have had the privilege of working with several preschoolers, some of which have very special needs. When you're dealing with leg braces, blindness, seizures, medications, feeding tubes, etc., PLUS the fact they're preschoolers, it puts some of my inconveniences in their proper perspective. It also motivates me to count my blessings and keep walking daily with God.

I know that God will guide Sue Scruggs (my Head Cha) and myself as we face the task of forming the team. It is only through God's guidance and prayer that we will be able to fulfill these positions. I ask that you would keep us in your prayers daily. Talk to God about the people in y our life and ask him about who to invite to Taste of Grace #2. Then pray for the Holy Spirit to follow through.

I hope and pray you all have a Grace-filled, lazy, laid-back summer.

Your Sister in Christ,
LaDonna Strakis, Rectora
Taste of Grace VDC #2



"just a closer walk with Thee"

Taste of Grace fall weekends are just around the corner and we all know the special closeness to God we feel during the weekend. For this issue of "The Taste" we have asked the secretariat members to tell us about the places they go where they feel closest to God. Here is what some of them told us:

Pastor Kathy, Spiritual Director: I enjoy being outdoors in the wide open spaces. Where I can see for miles and enjoy the blueness of the sky unfettered by buildings or pollution. In the sheer beauty and freedom of such a setting, my breath is taken away. And I feel that I have been given a glimpse of utter majesty. And God is present for me in the midst of that majesty.

Simon, Lay Director: Time spent with my wife and watching our children play in the garden are times when I feel closest to God.

Michele, Secretary: I feel closest to God in the midst of nature; in silence watching the sunset over a lake, seeing in awe the dew on a magnificently built spider web between two tree branches, hearing the contagious laughter of young children, watching an elderly couple who have been together for many years interact with one another or holding a newborn.

Fran, Property: When I am any-where outdoors with my guitar I feel closest to God.

Tim, Property: I feel closest to God in the woods in Michigan.

Lenny, Treasurer: I feel closest to God when I'm fishing. The lake front air, clouds moving overhead and maybe a critter or two running around in the nearby brush. How can anyone not be overwhelmed with all that God has created just for us? From an eagle soaring to a big bass jumping. It's the simple things in life that we so often take for granted and dismiss as "yea that's nice, but this is the real world", back to the hussle (or hassle). So when I can, I fish and pray. To hear the water against the shore and an eagle cry or a bass jump and then I pray "Thanks God, I know I'm not worthy of this gift, but Thanks!".

Donna, Communications: When I was growing up and went to the Jersey shore and even now when I visit my mom in South Carolina, my favorite spot to feel closest to God is when I sit on the beach watching the waves and feel God's presence in each sound of the ocean.

Taste of Grace Via de Cristo Secretariat

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"Life on earth is just a brief encounter on our journey to wider fields of usefulness where we can work together forever in the vineyard of the Lord."

- Helen Steiner Rice

The following article written by Andrew Kjos, Taste of Grace VDC #1 and was published in the May 2003 Issue of Cross of Glory Lutheran Church "News and Views."

A Chance to Go Deeper with a "Via de Cristo" Weekend

Two weeks ago, five men from Cross of Glory had a chance to experience a "Via de Cristo" weekend. We had no idea what we were in for, but we were open for whatever God had planned for us. For each of us, it was a different experience. I will tell you some about my experience. Please ask the others about theirs, I know each of us will tell you a different way that we experienced it, and we each came back with our own realizations (all of them good!).

"Via de Cristo" is Spanish for "Way of Christ." The weekend is very structured, and is intended to strengthen your faith, and help you become more aware of God's grace. I know for myself, I had recently felt emptiness in my faith life. This may seem odd for those of you that know me. I am at church for almost every service and I "should" have a strong faith. But each person's current faith life tends to change based on their current phase of life. When the Via de Cristo weekend was announced, I figured it was what I needed. I am glad I made room in my life for God's grace and I will continue to try and keep him in the forefront of my life.

It felt a little odd at first, spending three days with a group of men, listening to men talk about grace, study, sacraments, leadership and other topics. We were able to open up to each other, share our stories, and some of us even let it show that we had feelings! For me, the weekend reminded me that God's grace is never ending, and if you are able to just open your eyes and look around, you will be amazed constantly at the places you will see it. During the weekend I found I was actually feeling the need to pray, and contemplate some of my own issues in life. It felt good to discuss them with other men. I found that many of the issues that I am struggling with are the same ones that other men are struggling with.

I actually found it easy (well maybe not easy, but it didn't hurt) to let other men help me think about how I am letting material things and my own self doubt get in the way of my relationship with Christ, my Church, my Family, and my Friends. It was an amazing weekend for me. If you want to know more, please ask me about it. The others that attended the weekend from Cross of Glory can also share their experience with you: PJ Malin, Rich Renik, Henry Garza, and Andrew Morin.

Palanca - prayers and letters needed for fall weekends

† *Lord help me to give abundantly, someone is learning to receive*

True palanca is intense prayer and sacrifice on the part of the outside community for the community being formed in the Three-Day weekend.

The greatest contribution and the primary role of the outside community during the weekend is offering of palanca. Palanca is a witness to the participants that God is present in the world through groups of people who live His Gospel.

Banners, food, palanca letters, bookmarks and other small, inexpensive trinkets are nice and fun things that contribute to the good feelings of the weekend. If palanca is a piety act on the part of an individual or group on behalf of another individual, then "palanca" received during the three days should be a physical representation of those piety acts.

If you would like to provide any palanca for the upcoming weekends, here's the approx. count (per weekend)... we will have more accurate figures after the teams have been filled.

Pilgrims Only:	30	Rollo Room:	50
Team Only:	40	Everyone:	70

"NEEDS LIST" for Fall Weekends

- Flashlights**
- Unscented Votive Candles**
- White Poster Board**
- Kitchen Table Decorations**

If you'd like to donate any of the above items, please contact Fran and Tim Mulder at: (630) 820-8777 or send an email to: praisingpenguin@aol.com

Calendar of Events

Taste of Grace VDC Ultreya

Sunday, July 13, 2003
Abundant Life Church, Plainfield, IL
3:30 p.m. Worship
5:00 p.m. Potluck

Continuing Ed Training

Sunday, July 13, 2003 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Abundant Life Church, Plainfield, IL

Taste of Grace VDC Fall 2003 Weekends

September 25 - 28 - Men's Weekend #2
October 2 - 5 - Women's Weekend #2
Palanca: Amy Prior 815-834-1385 or email-
amyprior1@aol.com

Taste of Grace VDC 2004 Weekends

April 22 - 25 - Men's Weekend #3
April 29 - May 2 - Women's Weekend #3
Sept. 30 - October 3- Men's Weekend #4
October 7 - 10 - Women's Weekend #4

Check out www.viadecristo.org/palanca for other VDC weekend dates and contact information

Secretariat Meetings

June 29, 2003 - 3:00 p.m. at Prior's

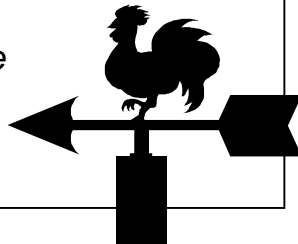
NLS Annual Meeting

July 24-27, 2003 - Columbus, Ohio

Representatives from Taste of Grace Secretariat will be attending the National Lutheran Secretariat event so look for exciting reports in our fall issue of "The Taste."

check out our website

www.tasteofgrace.com



From our Menu

PIETY STUDY ACTION

Each issue of "The Taste" features an article based on the Via De Cristo "tripod".

Servanthood has been the theme of this issue of "The Taste" and how appropriate as we begin to form teams for the Taste of Grace fall weekends.

I am currently reading the book "Improving Your Serve", by Charles R. Swindoll. I read the following passage which reflected the basic topics in the book....

"Not a getter...but a giver.
Not one who holds a grudge... but a forgiver.
Not one who keeps score... but a forgetter.
Not a superstar... but a servant."

While reading I was challenged to make a conscious effort to examine the concept of serving. In a poem about serving entitled "I Wonder", it talked about how God "knows" how we serve Him but in the final sentences it asks, "How would I react doing a task over and over , day after day, month after month, in a room where nobody saw and nobody knew." A great proof of true servanthood is anonymity.

So let's apply these thoughts to our "tripod":

Study: Challenge yourself to read more about serving others. There are many good books such as "The Heart of a Servant" by Ron Dicianni & Caesar Kalinowski and "Chasing God, Serving Man" by Tommy Tenney. And what better examples can we find than those from the Bible.

Piety: Devotions, meditation and prayer are all important parts of serving. Being a person who genuinely and personally serves others calls for a plentiful supply of passion for giving.

Action: Serve on team, at church or in your community. "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." - Luke 9:23

However you choose to serve God, remember that it is in giving that we receive, in serving others that our needs are met!

God Loves You and So Do I...

Donna Weaver
Living Water VDC #22

PRAYERS & PRAISES

- Please pray for Taste of Grace Men's and Women's Weekend #2... the secretariat, the rector, and rectora for continued guidance and direction, team members as selection begins, sponsors as they bring others to Christ & pilgrims as they make a commitment to grow in their relationship with Christ.
- Pray for Andrew (age 36), oldest son of Pastor Kathy Flores, that he finds the discipline to live responsibly, and that he finds a true relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Please remember the family of Rosa Ochoa in your prayers, especially our Brother in Christ, Jorge.
- Continue to keep cursillistas from Taste of Grace #1 in your prayers as they continue their 4th day journey. May they remember the mountaintop as they work in the hills and valleys.
- God's blessings on Amy Prior's friend, Lori and her journey to become a mother again. Lori has problems with recurrent miscarriages and she and her husband are both carriers for Potter's Syndrome, a genetic disorder that is not compatible with life. Please grant Lori and John strength and courage through their journey.
- Continued healing for Ray Koniewicz, Sr. as he is recovering from lung and heart disease.
- Please pray for travel mercies for the "His Hands Puppet Ministry" from Peace Lutheran Church in Morris. They have been called to perform in N.Y. this summer. We ask that God be with them as they witness to others using their talents to His glory!
- Be with those who are struggling with addictions, especially Rosann Rommelfaenger who has been cigarette free for 13 weeks after 45+ years of smoking.
- Please pray for Cora Banks as she makes some life changing decisions. We ask that God give her the wisdom and strength to follow His plan!
- As we celebrate the 4th of July let us continue to pray for our country, people in the military, our president and all of our leaders that help keep our land the "Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave".
- Please keep Tim Mulder in your prayers that God watch over Him and the equipment as it comes on line at Soldier Field over the next several weeks.
- Ask that God lift the shadow that surrounds the daughter of Tim and Fran Mulder.
- Prayers of thanks from Lenny Koniewicz. Thank you God for the love you show me through all of your unlimited gifts. Your gifts of nature and friends and family. Thank you for the opportunity to help share Your word and gifts with others.
- Be with our youth and with those who influence them, that as parents we can be the parents and mentors that God wants us to be.
- Ask that God be with all those taking vacations this summer that their time will be restful, playful and that they may enjoy all of God's glorious wonders along the way.
- Prayers for Karla King and her family as they try to pick up the pieces after losing everything to a house fire.
- Pray for a "servant heart" as you continue to serve God in whatever way you are called.

**And all God's
children say
"Amen."**

What's Your SERVANT PROFILE?

PASSION

Passion indicates "where" we should serve. Our passion is the God-given desire to make a difference in some area of ministry, and it involves our greatest emotional energy. We may think of it as a dream, a vision, a burden or a call.

God has put into the heart of believers a passion, intended to direct them to a special area of ministry. Our passion will act like a magnet, drawing us to our place of ministry.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Our spiritual gifts indicate "what" we should do. Our spiritual gifts are the God-given ability to serve others competently. Our spiritual gifts indicate what we should do in ministry. There is no right or wrong gift.

God "gives (the gifts) to each one, just as he determines." - 1 Corinthians 12:11

PERSONAL STYLES

Our personal styles indicate "how" we can best serve. Our personal styles are the God-given way we respond to the world and to those around us. It is the personality or temperament that God has created in us. Some of us make decisions better by looking at the facts, others by intuition. Some of us are energized by people interactions, others by task accomplishments.

What's important for each one of us is discovering and delighting in God's unique designs for us. Serving according to our personal styles enables us to serve more confidently.

(Article taken from DECISION magazine, July-August 2001).

GIVING GOD OUR ALL.

He who gives us all must have a right to all so that if we pay Him anything less than all, we cannot be faithful stewards. And considering that "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor," we cannot be wise stewards, unless we labor the uttermost of our power not leaving anything undone, which we possibly can do, by putting forth all our strength.

It is no small thing to lay out for God all which you have received from God. It requires all your wisdom, all your resolution, all your patience and constancy - far more than ever you had by nature, but not more than you may have by grace.

- John Wesley

"With each new dawn there is delivered to your door a fresh, new package called "today." God has designed us in such a way that we can handle only one package at a time . . . and all the grace we need will be supplied by Him as we live out that day."

(taken from "Improving Your Serve, by Charles R. Swindoll)

3 SHORT & FUNNIES

Beginning in the next issue of "The Taste" we will be sharing 3 short, clean and funny jokes.

If you would like to submit a joke send an e-mail to Donna Weaver at donna_a_weaver@hotmail.com

Our God is an awesome God!



REUNION GROUP GUIDELINES

*"I long to see you and share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you - rather, what I wish is that we may be mutually encouraged by our common faith."
- Romans 1:11-12*

The 3 -day weekend is a source of many insights to those who take part in it. These insights vary widely according to the background and temperament of each individual, but one insight is almost universal - the value of sharing our Christian hopes and experience with brothers and sisters in Christ. Reunion Groups are the backbone of our VDC community.

The Reunion Group is a voluntary meeting of friends to share with one another their efforts to live and grow in union with Christ. To be effective it must be open and relaxed. To be fruitful it must include a sharing of our own commitment to Christ (piety), our efforts to grow in our understanding of God's grace (study), and our efforts to share our knowledge and love of Christ with others according to a pre-determined plan (apostolic action).

The Reunion Group is a friendship elevated to the highest level - that of being a permanent actual grace.

The following are 10 reminders for effective group reunions:

- Commit yourself to God and to one another. Be regular in attendance and in participation.
- Prepare ahead of time. Bring something to share. Expect Christ to be awaiting your arrival.
- Focus on the service sheet .
- Practice your disciplines (Piety, Study, Action). If there is nothing to practice, nothing that needs improvement and nothing to share, there is no need to meet.
- Uphold one another. Encourage one another to be "accountable"; offer praise in prayer for your and another's growth.
- Pray for one another (at the meeting and during other prayer times).
- Be a spiritual friend to another; let them be a friend to you.
- Plan your discipleship. The group is a "covenant" relationship with friends. Set personal goals.
- Act as a group. Be a mission group within your congregation and in your community.
- Retreat with one another (once or twice yearly) at another location.

Please note: Sponsors have a responsibility to their candidates to see that they are part of a Reunion Group.



Reunion Groups

If you belong to a reunion group we need to hear from you. We would like to compile the following information:

- day, time & place your group meets
- names of people In your Reunion Group and their original VDC weekend

Send to: Cheryl Lovell,
Post-Weekend Chairperson

Email: clovell @morrishospital.org

or Mail : 2605 Canyon Drive
Plainfield, IL 60544

Also, if you don't belong to a reunion group yet, contact Cheryl at (815) 254-3614 to see if there is a group in your area or someone else that might be looking to join a group!

Sponsors Are Needed

We are asking everyone to consider being a sponsor for the upcoming weekends. We all need to look if there is person we could possibly sponsor. The first step is to pray to God if the person should attend the weekend before we ask the person. If God leads you to asking the person you believe should attend, great. May the person accept and you then take the next steps of sponsorship.

What if you do not have anyone in mind: there is the possibility for being a sponsor.

We found for the Taste of Grace Via de Cristo #1 Weekends there were possible candidates, but no sponsors. For some we were able to find sponsors, but it was at the last minute and time was critical.

We are preparing for the upcoming Taste of Grace Via de Cristo fall weekends in September 25 - 28, 2003 is the Men's Weekend #2 and October 2-5, 2003 is the Women's Weekend #2. We know weekend #1 was just completed. Yet for the members of the Secretariat, we need to start looking at the fall weekends in 2003 and also at the spring weekends of 2004. It is called planning.

Being a new Secretariat, we gain experience by doing. We found that in some areas we over-planned, in some areas the planning met the needs, and in some areas the planning came up short.

We found one area we came up short in was having willing sponsors for candidates who did not have a sponsor. To correct this possible problem for the fall 2003 weekends, we are starting early looking for people who are willing to sponsor candidates. All interested people who are willing to sponsor a candidate, but have no one in mind; please contact us as soon as possible. The goal is to find willing sponsors early on so when applications and inquiries come in and a sponsor is needed, we will have a list of people to match a candidate to.

A lot of people may be asking why so early and why do you need sponsors. For the Taste of Grace #1 weekends we had candidates hear about the weekend at their church. One individual got an application, filled it out, and turned it in. We thank God the individual had the courage to follow God's calling. We found a person just a few days before the weekend that would sponsor this individual. At times we receive inquiries about the weekend and it would be extremely nice to have community members willing to sponsor a candidate lined up ahead of time.

Question 1 – Are you willing to be placed on a list of possible sponsors? Yes or No

Question 2 – Would you prefer to sponsor a male candidate, female candidate, or either male or female candidate?

Question 3 – From your home address, what would be the maximum distance in miles that you would be willing to travel to sponsor a candidate?

Please pray about being a sponsor and see if God calls you to share His love and grace with a brother or sister in Christ.

You can contact any Secretariat member and given them your name, location, telephone number and email address if you would. You can directly contact the **Pre-Weekend Coordinator**: Harry Benner , 100 Glenwood Lane. Morris, IL 60450 Telephone 815-942-1751 Email bennerhj@theramp.net

I've been informed that we have 3 to 4 potential candidates for the fall weekends and need sponsors for these candidates.

We thank everyone who considers being a sponsor and may God bless you.

Harry Benner, Pre-Weekend Coordinator
Taste of Grace VDC

"SPONSOR" RESPONSIBILITIES

Did you know that the Lord's work through Via de Cristo is in your hands? You may be considering or have agreed, hopefully after much prayer, to sponsor a man or woman for a weekend that may change that person's entire life. When you completed your weekend, the final statement to you was "Christ is counting on you." And you responded, "I am counting on Him." Now the question is "Will you be your brother's and sister's keeper?"

By agreeing to be a sponsor you will be undertaking tremendous responsibilities. First of all, you should be hesitant to sponsor someone who is not active in his or her congregation. That does not mean the person must be on a church board or be a Sunday School teacher, but he or she should worship regularly and participate in some area of church life. And remember, Via de Cristo is not intended to replace a marriage counselor or Alcoholics Anonymous. Problems such as these are better handled by professionally trained pastors and doctors.

When a person has expressed interest in Via de Cristo, make sure you take the time to explain, preferably to the couple together, what Via de Cristo is about. You should give them the Via de Cristo brochure, which explains generally what to expect from the weekend. If your brother or sister happens to be a pastor, it would be a good idea to contact one of the spiritual directors who will be glad to explain Via de Cristo in more depth.

It is your responsibility to pick up the person you are sponsoring and take him or her to the send-off. Be sure to be on time to check him or her in with the Pre-Weekend Coordinator. Getting the husband or wife letter is also crucial, or if the weekender is single get a letter from the pilgrim's parent or another close relative or friend. The person from whom you request the letter should be given at least a week's warning along with explanation of the letter's importance. You can simply explain that it is traditional for each person to receive a letter of love and encouragement and that the pilgrim will be the only one who will read it. Be sure the letter is turned in to a member of the team no later than the send-off. The envelope should have the pilgrim's name on it and be

marked in the upper right-hand corner W(wife), H(husband), C(child), M(mother), or F(father). A lot of heartache is saved with this is done properly. You should also write a palanca letter.

It is not your responsibility to pay for the pilgrim's weekend. Of course you may pay if you wish. If you do not pay for them you must point out the cost involved to them for the weekend, currently \$95.

Please check on the family during the weekend and be sensitive to any special needs. Let the family know approximately what time to expect the pilgrim home on Sunday evening. You should attend the dedication of the crosses service if at all possible and you must attend the Closura and see your friend safely home. Since dinner is not served Sunday night, it would make a homecoming more pleasant if you fed the new cursillista on the way home. He or she may prefer, however, a speedy return home to dinner.

When the weekend is over, your job has not ended. It is vital that Via de Cristo be a continuing experience, so make sure the cursillista finds a reunion group. Keep tabs on him or her so if he or she is not happy, you can help him change groups. If he or she is not very involved at church, discuss with your pastor ways he or she can be brought into the work of the congregation. You should also bring the cursillista to the first Ultreya.

Most importantly, pray – for Christ is counting on you, and you are your brother's and sister's keeper.

"Potluck and Prayers" Taste of Grace Via de Cristo

COOKBOOK

Available soon... more details in
September issue of
"The Taste."

Evangelism – Outreach

(continued from page 4)

If you are interested in doing a "temple talk", linking me with a pastor at your church or obtaining any brochures, please call me at (815) 875-1330.

In closing I'd like to share the Screwdriver Story with you... Everyone knows that the purpose of a screwdriver is to drive screws into or out of something. That is what the designer(s) envisioned when designing the screwdriver. The overall shape of the screwdriver end has changed over the years; however, it still continues to maintain its original purpose.

The basic screwdriver is known as the "flat-blade" screwdriver. Its purpose is to drive single-slotted screws into or out of an object. Most people are familiar with this particular screwdriver and its designed purpose. In addition, many people have experienced using the "flat-blade" screwdriver for other applications. Some of the more notable uses include:

- prying open paint cans
- poking holes through material
- chiseling
- taking off bicycle tires
- scraping marks on concrete or other hard surfaces

The Cursillo Movement is quite a bit like the screwdriver. It was designed for a specific purpose. Its surface has been reshaped over the years; however, its original purpose continues to remain the same.

Help us evangelize our environment and bring others to Christ.

God's grace be with you!
 Dick Volker, Outreach/ Evangelism Chairperson
 Taste of Grace VDC

All newsletter items, prayer concerns and praises can be e-mailed to me at:

donna_a_weaver@hotmail.com

or snail-mail to: Donna Weaver
 1320 Butler Street
 Morris, IL 60450

**Aug. 15th is the deadline
 for Fall newsletter items.**

Message from the Editor

I hope you have enjoyed this issue of "The Taste." Each month we strive to meet the needs of our Taste of Grace Via de Cristo community by offering you the most current 4th day community information along with articles that will strengthen your daily walk.

As we journeyed through the topic of "Servanthood" I hope each of you found something to enrich your 4th day journey. In closing I would like to take a moment to think about Mary & Martha. Mary was a worshipper – the very same Mary who broke the alabaster box on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. And Martha was a servant – the one who looked after Jesus' practical and physical needs.

In the book "Mary's Prayers and Martha's Recipes", Tommy Tenney stated the following, "In fact, if the truth were known, there is a little of Mary and a little of Martha in all of us. There are seasons in our lives when we are tucked away in the secret place, giving ourselves to prayer and contemplation. At other times we come out of that secret closet of intimate prayer and passionate pursuit searching for recipes that will enable us to touch the hurting ones all around us."

As you use your talents to the glory of God in your 4th day journey, be sure to take quiet time to afford the blessing of seeing God at work through each of you. It takes the loving service of Martha and the adoring prayers of Mary to complete the full ministry of the Body of Christ in this world.

"Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach." - Mark 3:14.

Go in Peace and Serve the Lord,



Shalom,

Donna Weaver, Editor