



www.tasteofgrace.com  
tasteofgracevdc@comcast.net

# The Taste

December, 2005

Newsletter for

*Taste of Grace Via de Cristo*

## Rejoice

And there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you; you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" *Luke 2:8-14*



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**Our prayers continue....**

Be with all Cursillistas in their 4th day journey. May they remember the mountaintop as they work in the hills and valley.

Lord, please be with your children whom you are calling to attend the upcoming spring weekends. Be also with the teams you are forming, that they are able to be Christ's hands, heart and ears to the pilgrims attending.

Dear Lord, continue to lift up and guide those in Erie IL whom are embarking on the wondrous journey of building a new church. Be with those chosen to lead, give them wisdom and help them to discern your will.

Pray for our troops--that God will guard and guide them whether they serve at home, overseas or in the volatile fields of Afghanistan and Iraq. Pray for their protection and for peace of mind for their friends, family and loved ones.

Ultimate Healer, please be with all those fighting cancer. Be with the patient for healing, with the medical profession for wisdom and with loved ones for comfort.

Dear Lord, please be with those of us who are depressed. Help us to overcome this dark void of sadness and despair. Wrap your loving arms around us and lift us up and give us the strength to overcome.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Father God, thank you for those you place in our lives, for our marriage partners, our reunion brothers & sisters and all others that help shape us into who you would like for us to become.

I just wanted to thank you for prayers for Dan. He came home Wednesday from the hospital. Still has some recovering but is doing a whole lot better.  
Let Go Let God handle all your troubles!

Thank you Lord, for your never ending love, grace, and forgiveness in our lives.

Brothers and Sisters In Christ,  
God is good! I just wanted to give an update on my friend Andy that you've all been praying for after the car accident. Andy is being sent home tonight because he is ahead schedule for his rehab and all is going better than expected. Thank God for helping Andy recover and thanks for your prayers and continued prayers as he recovers.

**(Prayers Continued on Following Page)**

**PRAY FIRST, PRAY LAST, PRAY ALWAYS**



### Prayer concerns

Dear Lord, continue to wrap your loving and strengthening arms around the Flores and Prior families as they struggle with Tony's illness and resulting surgery. Be with them and the doctors, guiding them all in decisions to be made regarding long term care.

Dear Lord, please continue lifting Annmarie up, strengthening, calming, and comforting her as she continues searching for remedies to help ease her seizures. Continue to guide and grant wisdom to her physicians. Please fill her coworkers and supervisors with compassion and understanding.

Heavenly Father, also let Vera feel Your loving arms around her at this time of need. Give her doctors wisdom in treating her. Lift Vera up, strengthen and nourish her. Dear Lord, also be with Dawn and her family, giving them strength and comfort.

Dear Lord please continue to be with Jan Curry, give her strength and healing. Help her body to overcome infection and take in the nourishment needed to sustain and heal her.

Dear Lord, be with Rhonda and Pr Dave as they face the unknowns of surgery. Help Rhonda to heal fully, guide her doctors and give them wisdom.

Heavenly Father continue to lift up the family of Michael Jardine who so recently was laid to rest.

Dear Lord please let Tina feel your loving arms around her. Fill her with your presence and peace and love and help her to find her way back to You. Give her family strength and comfort them as they struggle through this difficult time, help them to find the words and actions you would have them use in loving and supporting Tina through her struggles.

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your promise of provision for our needs. Lord, deliver Pam and her family from any concern or worry for we know You will take care of them. Lord, give them the grace and faith they need to trust that You to will meet all of their needs. May they lean on Your strength to overcome all situations they face, and are confident that they shall have the victory in Christ's name. Amen.

Dear Lord, please be with Linda Parks and her family as they mourn the passing of her sister. Let them feel your loving arms wrapped around them, giving them strength and comfort, help them to find peaceful acceptance in their loss.

## **PRAY FIRST, PRAY LAST, PRAY ALWAYS**

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                    | <b>1. Make a friend</b>            |                       |
| <b>2. Be a friend</b>              |                                    | <b>2. Be a friend</b> |
| <b>3. Bring a friend to Christ</b> | <b>3. Bring a friend to Christ</b> |                       |





From the Spiritual Director...

Advent – prepare. Christmas – receive. Epiphany – share. It is a great time of the church year for Christians, especially for the Fourth Day community of Via de Cristo and other Cursillo movements. Why? Because these three seasonal themes, prepare, receive, share, are ‘echoed’ in a Via de Cristo weekend.

Prepare – team formation, prayer, getting candidate and letters, trusting God. Receive – focus on the candidates to receive all that God has to offer, especially the gift of Jesus Christ and all that Christ means. But, we that serve on team also receive his grace and love. Share – the simplest meaning of the 4<sup>th</sup> Day – pass it on!

Last week, as I prepared my sermon for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent, Pam shared an e-devotion with me from Max Lucado. It’s about Mary, and her saying “Here am I, the servant of the Lord.” Lucado called his devotion “CHRIST IN ME,” and it went like this:

Like Mary, you and I are to be “indwelt” by Christ. Find that hard to believe? How much more did Mary? No one was more surprised by this miracle than she was. And no one was more passive than she was. God did everything. Mary didn’t volunteer to help.

What did she have to offer? Mary offered **no assistance**. And she offered **no resistance**. Instead she said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

Unlike Mary, we tend to assist God, assuming our part is as important as God’s. Or we resist, thinking we are too bad or too busy. Yet when we assist or resist, we miss God’s great grace. We miss out on the reason we were placed on earth – God wants us to be so pregnant with heaven’s Child that he lives through us. To be so full of Christ that we could say with Paul, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ that lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20)

What would that be like? To have a child within is a miracle, but to have Christ within?

To have my voice, but him speaking.  
My steps, but Christ leading.  
My heart, but his love beating  
in me, through me, with me.  
What’s it like to have Christ on the inside?

To tap his strength when mine expires  
or feel the force of heaven’s fires  
raging, purging wrong desires.  
Could Christ become my self entire?

So much him, so little me  
That in my eyes it’s him they see.  
What’s it like to a Mary be?  
No longer I, but Christ in me.



May all of us continue to prepare for Christ, to receive Christ, and to share Christ in all that we say and do. He is, after all, the reason for the season!

In his love and service, J Pr. Craig



## TOG Leader's Training

We will all be hearing the familiar Nativity verses from Luke this holiday season "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.*" Yet with all the conflict and strife in our cities, our country, and our world, it is hard to imagine what the angels were heralding so long ago. It seems that nothing has changed - there is no peace even after 2000 years! So what were the angels talking about when they appeared to the shepherds? They were speaking of peace between God and man, not peace among mankind. Even Jesus made it clear that His first coming to earth was not for the purpose of bringing peace on earth. "*Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.*" (Luke 12:51) Yet even we Christians, knowing "the rest of the story," want Jesus to be an earthly King and save the world. However the real purpose in Jesus' coming was to make things right between God and man. That is where we, as Christian Leaders come in.

As we all heard in the Leader's rollo, it is our responsibility to help others discover the love of Christ and to help them become right with God. One way to do this is to become more actively involved with the leadership roles on Taste of Grace weekends. A Leaders training has been scheduled for Saturday, February 11, 2006 at Shepherd of the Hill Lutheran Church in Lockport. The training will be from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, with a BYO working lunch. The training is intended for persons interested in assuming a future role as head chas and rectors/rectoras. Please prayerfully consider attending this training. There is no charge for the training and no future obligation. If you are interested in learning more about the training or would like to sign up for it, please contact me at (815) 936-0173 or [pjsagebiel2@netzero.net](mailto:pjsagebiel2@netzero.net). It is important that anyone interested in attending the training contact me by February 7, 2006, so that I have enough materials prepared for the training.

Peace and blessings to you,  
Pam Sagebiel





Dear Friends in Christ,

This morning the "Legend of the Candy Cane" was shared with me and I'd like to share it with you...



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## **The Legend of the Candy Cane**

**According to legend there was a candy maker who wanted to invent a candy that was a witness to Christ.**

**First of all, he used a hard candy because Christ is the rock of ages. This hard candy was shaped so that it would resemble a "J" for Jesus or, turned upside down, a shepherd's staff. He made it white to represent the purity of Christ.**

**Finally a red stripe was added to represent the blood Christ shed for the sins of the world, and three thinner red stripes for the stripes He received on our behalf when the Roman soldiers whipped Him. Sometimes a green stripe is added as a reminder that Jesus is a gift from God.**

**The flavor of the cane is peppermint, which is similar to hyssop. Hyssop is in the mint family and was used in the Old Testament for purification and sacrifice. Jesus is the pure Lamb of God, come to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world.**

**So, every time you see a candy cane, remember the message of the candy maker: Jesus is the Christ!**

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The truth of this legend is unknown... however, what a wonderful faith reminder for us (and for our families) each time we see a Candy Cane shaped like a shepherd's staff we can be reminded of Jesus: the Good Shepherd.

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd."

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me..."

Merry Christmas!  
Scott Hoecker



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## Portion of Water

At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots of water to his house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. I am ashamed of myself, and I want you to throw me away and replace me. I have been able to deliver only half my

load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts, the pot said.

The bearer said to the pot, Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pots side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty with which to grace the house.

Moral: Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are, and look for the good in them.

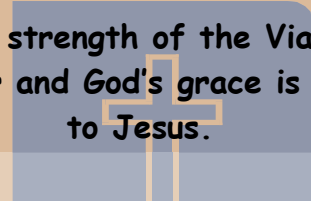
Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape. Remember to appreciate all the different people in your life!

*Author not known by submitter of article*



### 72-Hour Prayer Vigil

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



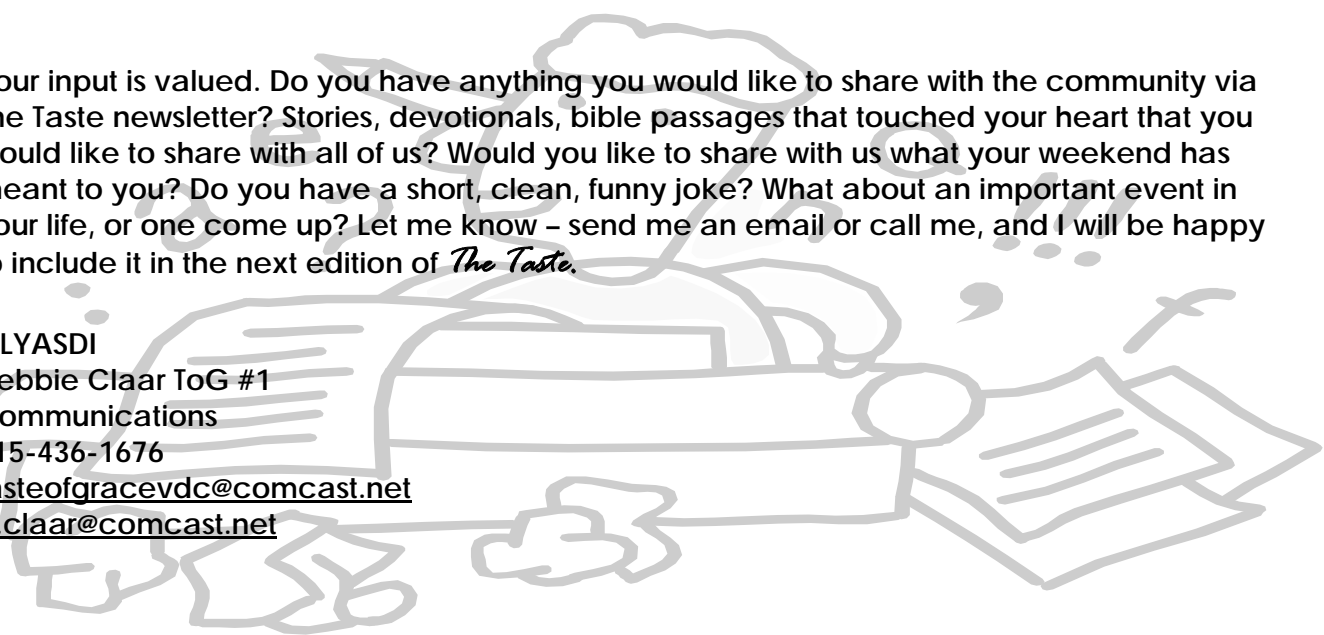
Don't delay, sign up today!

Three ways to sign up:

- Visit <http://www.3dayol.org/Vigil/GetComm.phtml>
- Call Amy Prior (4<sup>th</sup> Day Chair) at 815.230.2779
- Email Amy at [AmyPrior1@aol.com](mailto:AmyPrior1@aol.com)

Your input is valued. Do you have anything you would like to share with the community via The Taste newsletter? Stories, devotionals, bible passages that touched your heart that you would like to share with all of us? Would you like to share with us what your weekend has meant to you? Do you have a short, clean, funny joke? What about an important event in your life, or one come up? Let me know – send me an email or call me, and I will be happy to include it in the next edition of *The Taste*.

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 Debbie Claar ToG #1  
 Communications  
 815-436-1676  
[tasteofgracevdc@comcast.net](mailto:tasteofgracevdc@comcast.net)  
[d.claar@comcast.net](mailto:d.claar@comcast.net)



Is your church available for Ultreya's? If so, please contact either Gregg or Lisa Bickus at (815)-588-3209. Taste of Grace Via de Cristo holds their Ultreya's on the second Saturday of every odd month. We are in need of locations, and we bring our own supplies, and clean up when we are done. Please join us in fellowship and worship.









