

SONBEAM

Via de Cristo Newsletter

Volume 38, Issue #2

April - June 2017

Purpose And Direction

The purpose of our weekends is to help raise leaders in Churches. To do this we must establish a relationship with the candidates and help them develop a better relationship with Christ and their church community. Since I made my weekend #45 many candidates have become more active in their Churches and at least 8 to 10 have gone into the Ministry. God is at work in VDC.

THE WEEKEND IS ALL ABOUT THE 4th DAY.

The 4th day is about getting the candidates involved in a reunion group, plugged into the ultreyas and involved in being on teams and working weekends. This is where we seem to have lost our way. There seems to be a disconnect between our intention and our result.

Therefore, we at Secretariat are asking for help from the VDC community by having a **Town Hall Meeting** to get your input on how to do better.

Secretariat Workshop – **Town Hall meeting** Saturday, April 8 from 9:00AM to 11:00 AM at NW Presbyterian Church, 6330 54th Ave. N St. Petersburg.

Please be there! ***Bring your ideas and join the discussion*** on how we can revitalize our organization. Questions and concerns will also be heard.

We are also going to have a **leader's workshop** in a new way. We are going to have it in a General session with speakers highlighting ***the value and responsibilities of each position*** on the team. In this way, everyone will have a better understanding of all the parts of the weekend and why we do things the way we do.

Leader's Workshop - May 20, 2017, 9 AM – 1 PM.

First United Methodist Church of Pinellas Park, 9025 49th St N, Pinellas Park

The VDC Secretariat is seeking to find a better way of communicating and motivating our community to get involved and stay involved. We are seeking our answers through Prayer and ask for your prayers also.

All Things Thru Christ Our Lord.

Tom Henderson, Lay Director

Weekend #45

Welcome to
your 4th Day

The rest of your life with the Son at its center.

SECRETARIAT & STAFF

Lay Director

Tom Henderson
thenderson@sonbeamvdc.org

Asst. Lay Director

Jim Ryan
jryan@sonbeamvdc.org

Secretary

Lynn Conlen
lconlen@sonbeamvdc.org

Treasurer

Bobbi Lind
blind@sonbeamvdc.org

Pre VdC

David Lind
dlind@sonbeamvdc.org

Post VdC

Vacant Position

Communications

Sue Miller-Cinelli
scinelli@sonbeamvdc.org

Outreach

Chris Klafs
cklafs@sonbeamvdc.org

Leaders

Leslie Le Fleur
llefleur@sonbeamvdc.org

Physical Arrangements

Ricky Neal, Ray Stitchler, Daniel Galbreath
rneal@sonbeamvdc.org

Purchasing Agent

Jerry Brown
jbrown@sonbeamvdc.org

Local Palanca

Denise Bentley
dbentley@sonbeamvdc.org

Extended Palanca

Kim Stauder
kstauder@sonbeamvdc.org

Prayer Line Coordinator

Wendy Kinka
wkinka@sonbeamvdc.org

At-Large #1

Vacant Position

At-Large #2

Vacant Position

Spiritual Directors

Pastor John Foster
johnfoster@sonbeamvdc.org

Pastor Richard White
rwhite@sonbeamvdc.org

Pastor Mary Ashcraft
mashcraft@sonbeamvdc.org

Pastor David Lind
dlind@sonbeamvdc.org

Newsletter Editor

Karen Allen

Webmaster

Michael Schreiner
mschreiner@sonbeamvdc.org



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

APRIL – JUNE 2017

VERY IMPORTANT EVENTS

APRIL 8TH SATURDAY, 9 AM – 11 AM
TOWN HALL MEETING

“Meet with your Secretariat – Express your ideas”

Northwest Presbyterian Church
6330 54th Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL 33709

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MAY 20TH SATURDAY, 9 AM – 1 PM

LEADERS (*that means you*) WORKSHOP
Brand New Format

First United Methodist Church of Pinellas Park
9025 49th Street North
Pinellas Park, FL 33782

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FALL WEEKENDS #68

Men – November 9th - 12th - Rector – Jimmy Ashcraft

Women – November 16th - 19th - Rectora – Chris Klafs

Visit sonbeamvdc.org and/or Facebook for additional dates as available.





The Three Pillars of Growing in God's Grace

1. **Piety**
2. **Study**
3. **Action**

All of us would acknowledge the necessity of integrating these activities into our personal growth. Each contributes to a more complete and rounded Spiritual life because it exposes us to the person of the Holy Spirit's personal interaction with us individually.

Piety alone without His guidance and whisper ministry, only leads to ritualism, void of life from God. Christianity is marked by the presence of the Holy Spirit and the rudiments of the Holy Scriptures.

Study alone without our eager obedience leads to arrogance and legalism. Judgement can be harsh and ruthless if we don't filter it through compassion and forgiveness. Peter asked Jesus how many times we are to forgive the offenses of others. What did Jesus say? Not seven, not seventy but seventy times seven! (490 times!) the same offense. Wow! I don't believe counting the number is important compared to the attitude of forgiveness. Does God keep a record of your offenses? I don't know how you think or feel about it but I am eternally grateful!

Action alone without the presence of God's Spirit leads to sentimentality and irrational conclusions and decisions. Becoming part of a bigger problem and not a solution!

Yes, we really need all three parts to balance out our lives but we also need the Trinity alive in our daily lives to draw us closer into harmony and understanding of what God is teaching and transforming us into... ***The image of His Son!***

The only way this can happen is with one more attribute. That is a matter of the heart. **Where does prayer fit into this?**

Only with the heart our heart is what God is after to change and strengthen us. We can know our own hearts only by the choices we make each day. How do we know someone truly loves us, by what they do for us? "*Actions speak louder than words.*", was a favorite saying of my mother. I believe what she said was right.

Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." This is one of the moments where Jesus quantified love. This has nothing to do with salvation but everything to do with knowing Him and growing in Him. Obedience to Christ is the true measure of our devotion to Him. We become more like Him as we grow in our love for Him. This has no end or limit in our experience. Don't gauge your life in Christ on your experiences. They are not the true measure. Your devotion to Jesus is to be measured by your obedience to His calling and willingness to serve without any thought of what you will gain from it. A personal relationship to Jesus is incomparable to any other standard. His light and presence is all why we were created. Don't squander your life for anything temporal or of less magnitude!

Jesus loves you my brothers and sisters and so do I!

Pastor Richard White

A MESSAGE FROM OUR ASSISTANT LAY DIRECTOR

Introduction

One of the blessings of being able to participate in the Via de Cristo is a greater understanding that we share a ministry which spans the world. Travel virtually anywhere in the world and I venture that, with not a lot of looking, you can find fellow cursillistas in that community. With that common bond also comes a shared experience, that we each have experienced a 72-hour weekend which was remarkably similar in content and structure. Sonbeam, as a member of the National Lutheran Secretariat (NLS), strives to follow the core Essentials of a VdC Weekend, we use the standard progression of 14 talks and follow core principles and outlines related to those 14 talks.

My wife Lynn and I have been privileged and blessed to be able to attend the NLS Annual meeting most of the past fifteen years since initially making our weekends. Like all, now and then, family and/or other commitments can intrude but we always start each year's calendar by marking off the last weekend in July to attend the National VdC Gathering. This year the gathering will be held in Winston-Salem NC area, July 27th to 30th, on the campus of Wake Forest University. Much like a weekend it will involve three days of fun, fellowship, and, of course food. The cornerstone is the opportunity to share a Love of Our Lord and worship him with brothers and sisters from across the U.S.

The National Lutheran Secretariat provides many great resources for member Secretariats, one of which is the Essentials Manual. This document sets out the core principles which are regarded as critical to maintaining an active, vibrant Via de Cristo movement in each of our environments. This year, our Sonbeam VdC newsletter will feature a series of short articles highlighting some of the key topical points found

in the essentials manual which runs 134 pages in total.

*I think that one small cautionary point is critical at the onset. The Essentials are nothing more than the core guiding principles around which each Secretariat bases their weekends. They are not verbatim rules and regulations but rather, much like the lines painted on the edges of a highway, a means to identify where the stable pavement starts to erode. We will also be discussing our Essentials at most of our upcoming Ultreyas. Hopefully this will evolve as a prayerful discussion and engender discussion, and doubtless mild disagreement here and there. Let us pray first and foremost that we receive each of our brothers' and sisters' views in the spirit of understanding and be willing to consider how we can strengthen our movement to **Make Friends, Be Friends, and Bring Those Friends to Christ** forever.*

***The Following is Part I of this series –
Via de Cristo Essentials –
Pre-weekend Preparation***

Pre-weekend activities – Sounding and Stabbing

It is likely no surprise to many that the pre-weekend preparation phase is the most consequential part of the Via de Cristo method. Through this process the Via de Cristo searches for leaders in local environments with the intent to introduce them to Jesus Christ and help them discover their personal calling. This has been a hard lesson for many Via de Cristo movements to learn and many who do not struggle to maintain consistent forward progress.

Because it is so inspiring, it seems only natural to focus our attention on the weekend. This does appear to work well in the beginning, like a match on first striking, but many people who love the weekend do not become, or stay involved in the 4th Day.

Often movements conclude the apparent solution seems to be to place more emphasis on

group reunions. When this alone does not produce the desired results and the number of good participants begins to dwindle (principally because all the family and friends of participants have now attended) the community finally realizes the crucial need for good pre-weekend selection of environments and careful preparation of participants.

Participant Selection

Haphazard and/or random selection of participants is neither desirable nor wise. We encounter many who feel that planning, systems, and structures oppose the “free flow of the Spirit.”

In *Via de Cristo*, we find it more often true that to fail to plan is to deny the Spirit’s lordship in critical areas. We place a heavy emphasis on prayer-filled planning. No event of the three-day weekend is left simply to chance. Instead, we humbly ask the Spirit for wisdom as we carefully and lovingly develop plans.

Likewise, in Pre-Weekend, we wish participant selection to be conscious and deliberate. The first planned step is to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any environments in which God wishes us to work (*Acts 16:7-10*). Remember, when we refer to “environments” we are speaking of the many specific settings which Christians may encounter daily; at home, on the job, at leisure, in the Church, and maybe even a specific geographical setting.

We need to study each environment prayerfully, systematically and intentionally. Where will we have the most significant impact on the largest number of people? What systems have the greatest power to influence the lives of the most people?

In each specific environment, we should begin to seek out natural leaders. We ask, where is it that people seem happy, giving, or generous? What is the true relationship between the people in the positive atmosphere? What binds them together? Is it money, power, genuine respect?

Who are the leaders? These are usually likely to be the first people to approach. When we look at an environment we should ask the question;

who is the “go to” person? Who is it that everyone likes to spend time with? Who is it that people most want to hear out before they decide? Who seems to alter the atmosphere most quickly when arriving? Many times, that person is not the person who has a titled position in the organization.

All environments are first studied in prayer. As the natural leader or leaders of that environment are sought out careful prayer is essential, both for and about those leaders and for those who may be approaching any of them. Usually it is best to pick two and preferably three leaders from the environment so they may attend a weekend together. Then, like logs on a fire, they keep each other inspired in a natural group reunion. They more effectively own the method as a habit for life, and they, through their mutual support, have a significant influence on the environment when they return.

Having identified specific leaders, we can begin to approach them. ***Make a friend***. The Cursillo literature originally developed in Spain used the terminology of a bullfight. The first term used was “sounding.” This is simply finding out about this person who will be our new friend. We want to answer all the natural questions about the person, and at the same time, we want to know about her relationship to Jesus.

Be a friend. Seeking to be a friend should be done carefully, never violating the bounds of propriety. Showing respect for the identity and worth of people is founded on the inviolable dignity of each person; we are each made in the image and likeness of God (*Genesis 1:26*). Through “sounding” we simply add to our discussion about weather, sports, and children a gentle religious inquiry. Whatever the response, we should strive to accept people exactly where they are. We only sound them out to get to know them and evaluate how we can effectively begin what Cursillo refers to as “stabbing.”

In the bullring, the term “stabbing” denotes the pricking of the bull with a lance to get him to charge the matador. In *Via de Cristo* we use it to describe the carefully chosen, and Spirit inspired, questions that will challenge our friend

to a new level of growth. We use questions that encourage our friend to consider Christ in ways that may not have occurred to her before. When the timing is right we will be allowed to share a personal witness of what Jesus means to us. Our ultimate goal is to be able to pray with our friend in such a way that he or she meets our best friend, Jesus.

Much of this technique may appear to be just common sense, but used by grace with the Holy Spirit it is a powerful tool. Too many participants fail to remember that ***“Christ and I are an overwhelming majority.”***

SECRETARIAT NOTES:

Wendy Kinka, Prayer Line Coordinator

Please note that there are two ways to share your prayer requests. God knows the details, so short requests are appreciated. Instead of posting it on the Websites, feel free to call me at 813-260-3122. Nothing should be posted without permission.

David Lind, Pre VdC

Please pray for:

- our community. that God will revitalize us and draw us closer together;
- Rectora Chris Klafs and Rector Jimmy Ashcraft as they prayerfully prepare to call teams,
- God to guide you to the right candidates for the next set of weekends. We have plenty of time to prepare!

Please join us at the “New” Leaders Workshop, with fresh content, sponsorship requirements and duties, as well as reconnecting with the community. I look forward to seeing you there!

Jerry Brown, Purchasing

Still need someone to train or take over my purchasing position.

A SAINT’S PRAYER

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

St. Francis of Assisi

FOR THE ABILITY TO FORGIVE

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught me to pray:
“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those Who trespass against us.”

In your name, I am to repair the breach; I am to mend the broken; I am to welcome back the wanderer who returns.

Lord Jesus Christ, help me to understand that this Power is your power, to be used for the sake of those for whom you died.

Help me to understand that I cannot turn away from any who ask for forgiveness or need my forgiveness.

Help me to overcome any hindrance that would keep me from sharing the fullness and the power of your saving and forgiving grace. I ask it in the power of your name. Amen

COME, HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful **and kindle in us the fire of your love.** Send forth your Spirit, and we shall be created. **And you shall renew the face of the earth.**

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant, that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolations. Through Christ our Lord. Amen



I THEN SHALL LIVE



I THEN SHALL LIVE AS ONE WHO'S BEEN FORGIVEN
I'LL WALK WITH JOY TO KNOW MY DEBTS ARE PAID.
I KNOW MY NAME IS CLEAR BEFORE MY FATHER;
I AM HIS CHILD AND I AM NOT AFRAID.

SO GREATLY PARDONED, I'LL FORGIVE MY BROTHER;
THE LAW OF LOVE I GLADLY WILL OBEY.

I THEN SHALL LIVE AS ONE WHO'S LEARNED COMPASSION;
I'VE BEEN SO LOVED THAT I'LL RISK LOVING TOO.
I KNOW HOW FEAR BUILDS WALLS INSTEAD OF BRIDGES;
I'LL DARE TO SEE ANOTHER'S POINT OF VIEW.

AND WHEN RELATIONSHIPS DEMAND COMMITMENT,
THEN I'LL BE THERE TO CARE AND FOLLOW THROUGH.

YOUR KINGDOM COME AROUND AND THROUGH AND IN ME,
YOUR POWER AND GLORY LET THEM SHINE THROUGH ME.
YOUR HALLOWED NAME, O MAY I BEAR WITH HONOR,
AND MAY YOUR LIVING KINGDOM COME IN ME.

THE BREAD OF LIFE, O MAY I SHARE WITH HONOR
AND MAY YOU FEED A HUNGRY WORLD THROUGH ME.

I THEN SHALL LIVE AS ONE WHO'S BEEN FORGIVEN

MUSIC: "FINLANDIA" JEAN SIBELIUS



God's salvation is His blessing. God blessed the creatures of the sea, the birds of the air, and the man and woman whom He had created. He told them to be fruitful and multiply. An added blessing to the man and woman was to fill the earth and subdue it. They were given stewardship over the rest of God's creation. Saved persons are stewards of God's blessings.

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P.O. Box 2582
Pinellas Park, FL 33780-2582**

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Newsletter Policy

We publish our newsletter four (4) times a year online with two (2) of those mailed before each numbered set of weekends. All articles are subject to editing and will be reviewed when submitted. Publication and deadline dates are listed in the **Community Calendar on both our website and page 2 of this publication.**

Please choose to read the newsletter online and save on the cost of mailing by e-mailing: johnfoster@sonbeamvdc.org

<http://www.sonbeamvdc.org>

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