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The Taste

February 2005

Newsletter for

Taste of Grace Via de Cristo

A note from Taste of Grace #5 Rectora

"In the same way, let your light shine in front of others. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will praise your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:16

Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

The above verse reminds me of the song that many of us learned as children, "This Little Light of Mine." Though we may feel small in number, our lights are beacons in the dim, light-starved world . . . Our lives a reflection of our

God of love and mercy. And as we embark on another TOG weekend, all we do is to shine brightly for God, so that He may be glorified and exalted to the highest place.

When I accepted the invitation to be Rectora for TOG #5, I did so with a little bit of apprehension and a lot of self-doubt. But now that team formation is underway, and training about to begin, I am feeling like I am in a much calmer and peaceful place than when I originally took on this role. Yes, God is at work. And He has called many women to serve

beside me on TOG #5 who have graciously said yes to His call.

As we make this familiar journey once again, please lift up prayers for the pilgrims God is calling to this weekend. Please pray for the team, that they will be strengthened and renewed through their service. And please pray for me that God will continue to be at the helm of TOG #5.

De Colores!

Amy Prior
Rectora TOG #5

Prayers:

- Lord, please be with your children whom you are calling to attend the upcoming spring weekends. Be also with the teams you've formed, that they are able to be Christ's hands, heart and ears to the pilgrims attending.
- For all those affected by the tsunami disaster. Please Lord, comfort these people as they mourn and start to rebuild. Keep them safe and healthy as they now face untold health concerns, poverty, and starvation.
- 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 lift up and strengthen Karen Peterson and her family as they make decisions regarding mom Betty Kirk's living arrangements and health needs. Please give Betty's doctors wisdom and help to heal Betty and give her strength and comfort.
- Dear Lord, please be with Kathy and Tony Flores as they make decisions regarding his long term care. Comfort Tony and lift him up as he struggles with Kidney failure.
- 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
- Our prayers continue for the Cursillistas from Taste of Grace #1, #2, #3, and #4 as they continue their 4th day journey. May they remember the mountaintop as they work in the hills and valley.
- 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.



The Lay Director

Galatians 6:9-10
 9So we must not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up.
 10Therefore, as we have opportunity, we must work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.

I hope that you noticed we have new secretariat members! I would like to welcome David and Ruth Van Zant, Outreach; Jeni and Troy Thomas, pre-weekend; Lisa and Gregg Bickus, post-weekend; Scott Hoecker, property co-chair; Joe Claar, Communications co-chair; and Pam Sagebiel, who has moved from pre-weekend to leaders. Thank you all for your commitment and support in this endeavor of raising

new Christian leaders. I would ask all our community members to raise these good souls up in prayer so that they can commit themselves joyfully and profitably to Taste of Grace.

On a more personal note I would like to thank all those who worked, prayed, sang and otherwise supported men's Weekend #4. If you didn't know, I was rector for that weekend. Let me tell you about being a rector. It is one of the most stressful, tiring, frustrating and rewarding jobs I have ever done. People let you down, the camp changes meal times on you so you have to bend the script to fit, I had to attend my father's funeral the weekend before and moved into our new house the day before the weekend started. Thank you to every one who prayed

for me, carried my stuff into our new house and, of course, followed through on their commitment to work the weekend.

The one thing I always struggle with is prayer. I was always taught to be self-sufficient and that I can achieve any goal with enough application. It's not true! Thursday afternoon of the men's weekend I was feeling very stressed. My Head Cha (thank you Tim, my brother) noticed and took me by the hand somewhere quiet where we spent some time in prayer. We did the same thing every morning before starting worship and again at night. It works. Try it if you're feeling stressed or over-worked, take your burdens and lay them at the foot of the cross, Jesus will take them from you.

God Loves You All And So Do I
 Simon

A note from Taste of Grace #5 Rector

Pray all the time - 1 Thessalonians 5:17

The power of prayer is awesome. TOG #5 men's team will be doing a lot of praying during training and in our time leading to the retreat. We must keep our focus on God in all of our actions and thoughts. We as a team must remind ourselves to continually pray for the candidates and team for this weekend to be successful. Place reminders around your house or in your car to bring your thoughts back to prayer. After a while it will turn into a habit. We must train our minds to remember God. God wants to be

more than an appointment in your schedule. He wants to be included in every activity, every conversation, every problem, and even every thought.

Our first training session focused on building a closeness within our team. As we go through our remaining training sessions prayer will also be at the forefront of our days activity. Start right now by practicing constant conversation with God.

Your Brother in Christ
 Gregg Bickus - Rector TOG #5



From the Spiritual Director

I appreciated the following notes by our NLS Spiritual Director in the NLS January 2005 newsletter, and thought them worthy for you to read (or, re-read!). + Pr. Craig Sagebiel

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Before your weekend, if you are like most people, the concept of "Spiritual Direction" was probably foreign to you. On the weekend you were asked, "Have you visited your Spiritual Director?" This is mentioned as a kind of preview to life in the 4th Day when Spiritual Direction can be a great resource for growing in grace.

It has been my experiences that as a weekend progresses, the role of Spiritual Directors becomes more and more clear to attendees. However, when the three days are over many are unsure of what this spiritual aid is and how best to utilize it in their Christian walk.

Spiritual Direction is not unique to our movement. It has been around in the Church for a

long time. Some denominations have developed its use very effectively. In the context of Via de Cristo, I would offer a few thoughts in the hope that our Secretariats will encourage greater use of Spiritual Direction in the 4th day.

▪ **Who is my Spiritual Director?** Ideally this would be a person's own pastor. He or she need not have attended a weekend, though it would of course be helpful.

▪ **How often should I seek Spiritual Direction?** Once or twice a year. Make an appointment to sit down for an hour or so to check in with your S.D. Pastors will welcome this - we don't often get to talk one-on-one with folks about their spiritual development (apart from crisis counseling).

▪ **What should be the agenda?** Think and pray about this beforehand. In the interest of time and focus I think a great outline for a session is: (Surprise!)

Piety - What's happening with my walk in Christ? In my worship life? In my devotional life? What has been satisfying and with what have I been struggling?

Study - What kind of literature have I been reading? What about Bible Study? What can I do to deepen my understanding?

Action - What have I been doing to live out my faith? What opportunities have I missed? As I view my family and work commitments, how can I be the person God wants me to be? And then, pray about these things together.

These are my views.....I welcome yours. Isn't God good? Joe Nilsen, NLS Spiritual Director



Book Review: The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown

I enjoyed this novel even though there seems to be a lot of controversy in its wake. I received an illustrated version for Christmas. My daughters both read it before I did and now all three of us want to read *Angels & Demons*.

Generally speaking I didn't get the impression that the book was anything more than a novel. I didn't put the book down

and have doubts about the foundation of my faith. I really don't want to go into details and risk ruining the joy of reading the book for those of you who haven't read it yet. However, I would enjoy discussing some of the concepts with those of you who have read it. Give me a call or send me an email.

Michele Koniewicz

"May you live in an age of excitement" is said to be a Chinese curse, based on the notion that excitement is inevitable linked to violence, turmoil and insecurity. Every age has its exciting elements, and the past few years surely have had their share.

The thinker ponders; must this exciting age we're in be as millennialists forewarned? Again the Chinese can be of help: the character for "crisis" combines the characters for "danger" and "opportunity." These days then may hold great opportunities amid their excitement and dangers.

I believe the primary opportunity is the same for each of us and perhaps our weekend retreat causes us to see it: to accept the presence and action of God in our world and to begin to evangelize and witness to it for those not "seeing" it.

Doing this may seem a challenge in what era namers call this post-modern post-Christian era, but it can be a source for reflecting on the excitement of our days.

Like most new habits of Effective Purpose Driven Christians starting in a small but consistent and clearly Christian way of responding within our environment will cause change. I offer a simple example my spouse uses. The expression he often uses in his career, community and personal life of inserting the phrase "...by the grace of God." If you think I'm suggesting yet another New Years Resolution to you I am. Let me know what happens after your first 100 days. "til then I'll continue to P.U.S.H (pray until something happens)...In His Name

Loretta Volker
Rectora ToG #4



It is all about Prayer

Prayer, can we ever pray too much? Can we ever be asked by others to pray too much? The answer is of course NO! We can never pray too much. The fact is we should pray and pray often and when we get done we should start all over again. God never gets tired of hearing our prayers he hears every one of our prayers even if we think he doesn't. It's how we talk to God and if we really listen when we pray its how God talks to us. Even if we don't always get the answer we want to hear. Prayer is the engine that drives the Via De Cristo weekend and a major part of this community as evident over

the last few months. The prayer requests poured in from all over, prayers of joy, prayers of sorrow, prayers of concern and prayers of thanksgiving. The response was incredible. Many people e-mailed some even called to express thanks for the prayer requests that went out to the community. Why? Because Prayer works! So remember to pray and pray often.

GLYASDI
Joe Claar ToG#1
ToG Communications

Prayer Times Available for Spring '05 Weekends

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 (4th Day Chair) at 815.230.2779
 - Email Amy at AmyPrior1@aol.com



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? A short, clean, funny joke? An important event in your life? Let me know – send me an email or call me, and I will be happy to include it in the next edition of the *The Taste*.

GLYASDI
Debbie Claar ToG #1
Communications

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Grace Before Meals

Bless our friends, bless our food
Come O'Lord and sit with us
May our talk glow with peace
Bring your love to surround us

Friendship and peace may it bloom and grow
Bloom and grow forever
Bless our friends...bless our food
Come O'Lord and sit with us

Grace After Meals

Hear our thanks Father God,
Thanks O'Son for being with us.
Thanks for friends giving peace,
Urging love strong sincere.

Friendship and peace, may they bloom and grow
Bloom and grow forever.
Thanks for friends, thanks for food,
Thanks O'Lord for being with us.



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Taste of Grace Via de Cristo

February 2005

Taste of Grace #5	Men's Team	Women's Team
Rector/a	Gregg Bickus	Amy Prior
Spiritual Director	Pr Dan Stalker	Pr Kathy Flores
Head Cha	Scott Hoecker	Jeni Thomas
Music Cha	Rob Bordenaro	Debbie Herrman
Ideal	Dave Van Zant	Lenae Kirchner
Laity	Woody Woods	Janeen Tietjens
Piety	Steve Strakis	Dani Gonigam
Study	Steve Peterson	Traci Little
Action	Andy Kjos	Jacey Hoecker
Leaders	Ken Franz	Debbie Claar
Environment		Michele Koniewicz
CCIA	Dick Volker	Lisa Bickus
Silent Professor	Gene Sullivan	
	Frank Brozek	
Head Rollo Room Cha	Ed Walter	Debbie Claar
Table Cha	Mike Bryant	Carol Marshall
	Daryl Caneva	Jan Gora
Head Outside Cha	Frank Marshall	Pam Sagebiel
Utility/Kitchen Cha	Gary Constantino	Ruth Van Zant
	Craig Christensen	Karen Franz
	Jim Forbes	Pat Dever
	Harvey Bolton	Carolyn Clark
Head Chapel Cha	Joe Claar	Janet Nackovic
	Reno Caneva	Tammy Gonigam
	Bob Peters	
Head Palanca Cha	Lenny Koniewicz	Karen Peterson
	Fred Henize	Dawn Constantino
		Cathy Hawkins
Prayer Warrior	Robert Borger	
	Chuck Conklin	



Calendar of Events

March 12, 2005 Ultreya

Apr 21—24, 2005S Spring Taste of Grace Men's Weekend #5

- Thursday Apr 21 7:00pm Sendoff
- Saturday Apr 23 7:00pm Serenade – practice begins at 6:00pm
- Sunday Apr 24 4:00pm Clausura

Apr 28-May 1, 2005 Spring Taste of Grace Women's Weekend #5

- Thursday Apr 28 7:00pm Sendoff
- Saturday Apr 30 7:00pm Serenade – practice begins at 6:00pm
- Sunday May 01 4:00pm Clausura

Spring Weekend Team Formation Training Dates

1. Saturday Feb 5, 2005
Shepherd of the Hill
Lutheran Church, Lockport
2. Saturday Feb 26, 2005
Abundant Life Lutheran
Church, Plainfield
3. Saturday Mar 19, 2005 - TBD
4. Saturday Apr 2, 2005 - TBD

Taste of Grace Via de Cristo Secretariat

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