



www.tasteofgrace.com
tasteofgracevdc@comcast.net

The Taste

June 2005

Newsletter for

Taste of Grace Via de Cristo

Prayers:

- Lord, please be with your children whom you are calling to attend the upcoming fall weekends. Be also with the teams that are forming, that they are able to be Christ's hands, heart and ears to the pilgrims attending.
- 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.
- 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, #4, and #5 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.
- 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.
- Thank you Lord, for your never ending love, grace, and forgiveness in our lives.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations"
Matthew 28: 19

As new leaders of the 'Outreach' function of the "Taste of Grace" Secretariat, we see our main function spreading the word about "Via de Cristo" throughout our area churches in order to create interest and understanding and to grow the community to the glory of God.

We've spent much time in prayer in trying to understand the size of the task and to create an organized approach to best achieve these goals. Working with a clean sheet of paper, as we are doing, is sometimes a blessing but more often it presents greater challenges. To this end we are asking all of our "Taste of Grace" community family to support our efforts; first with prayers and secondly by contacting us with the following information.

1. Name and contact information (address, e-mail, etc.)
2. Taste of Grace weekend attended
3. Congregation affiliation

Once all of this information is entered into a spread sheet we will, in all likelihood be asking some of you to act as the contact person for your congregation. Secondly, we will be able to see which congregations in our area have not yet been touched by "Via de Cristo" and work to introduce ourselves to those congregations, seeking to provide information, meet their leaders, offer temple talks to the congregation to build interest and eventually community.

This is the first step in a long journey, and once again we ask for your prayers and cooperation.

"God loves you and so do we!"

Your sister and brother in Christ,
Ruth and David VanZant

815-834-1293

davevanzant@comcast.net





A message from our Fall ToG #6 Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters-in-Christ,

Greetings to all! Taste of Grace #6 has been blessed to have lots of help thus far in preparing for this fall. As I'm writing this, my Bible is opened to the following passage-

“This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with

everyone else.” 2 Corinthians 9:12-13

Thanks to the following for their service:

- Michele Koniewicz for creating the postcards requesting folks consider serving on TOG#6 team
- The folks that considered (are considering) serving on team this fall
- The following prayer warriors
 - Al Ashby
 - Joe Claar
 - Linda Draeving-Hammackk
 - Larry Nickels
 - Keith Reed
- All those that have graciously sent notes of encouragement

- My 4th Day Group for their prayers and accountability

In Matthew Chapter 18 v.19-20, Jesus says,
“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

Request. Would you consider inviting someone you know (who has not attended Via de Cristo) to join your 4th day group?

Peace and Joy,
 Scott Hoecker

Make a friend, Be a friend, Bring a friend to Christ





A MESSAGE FROM OUR FALL TOG #6 RECTORA

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight” *Proverbs 3:5-6*

I’ve sort of adopted these verses as my life verses. They constantly remind me that his knowledge and wisdom puts him in a much better position to run my life than *I am* able to run my life. And I know this to be true since I was running my life on my own for the first 21 years, and how shall I say this, um, I didn’t do a very good job. When we earnestly seek his will and submit to it, life just seems to go better. It’s not that life is then pain free, but it’s much more bearable.

I’m trusting that Taste of Grace is HIS ministry and not ours. We are just his servants using the gifts he has given us to do his will. I trust that he is gathering his children to form teams for the upcoming weekends. I trust that these teams will be molded and shaped to his liking providing we align our will with his. I trust that he is preparing the pilgrims he has chosen to take this pilgrimage. I trust in his promises to be with all those who call on his name.

I also trust that he has aided us with the wisdom of those who have gone before us, for example the individuals who recorded scripture or those written about in scripture. I was thinking about this

yesterday when the Taste of Grace Secretariat had a day-long retreat to review documents, most of which were given to us by other communities or the National Lutheran Secretariat. Following this article, I’ve pasted in a section from chapter 8 of our Secretariat manual (see page 4.) Those who have gone before us have identified what the essential elements are for a weekend to be successful in leading the pilgrims into a deeper relationship with Christ.

There is however, one critical element not mentioned. And that is YOU! Without servants who care about others, who want to help others know Christ better, there would be no team. There would be no one to share faith-filled experiences through the rollos, no one to lift others up in prayer, no one to demonstrate servanthood by cleaning toilets or serving food. Without faithful servants there would be no Christian Community in Action providing these weekend experiences.

Thank you for the examples you set and share. You’ve touched my life and helped me see Christ more clearly and more tangibly.

DeColores
God loves you and so do I
Michele Koniewicz, Rectora Taste of
Grace Women’s weekend #6



8.7.3 - Essential Elements

We follow the National Lutheran Secretariat recommendations on those elements that must be present on a Via de Cristo, and those non-essential elements that may be selected based upon the circumstances of the weekend.

Palanca - The heart and lifeblood of the movement -- deep, intentional, selfless prayer

Seventy Two Hours - Three full days of Christian Community, away from ALL the distractions of daily life

Holy Communion Daily - Jesus is truly present in Word and Sacrament; both are made available to the candidates

Five Meditations - Five guided image meditations; offered to assist the candidates in examining their relationship with Christ

14 Rollos - Actually separated parts of one talk necessary to cover the basics of the Via de Cristo method

Write Downs - Specific ideas and power phrases that capture the essential points of each of the rollos

Discussions - Small group encounters where Christ can come alive in the community and the fundamentals of Christianity can be reviewed

Posters - Hand drawn expressions of the essential meaning of each of the rollos

Decuria Sharing - A summarizing of the day's rollos; a wonderful opportunity for candidates to talk before a larger group

Silent Retreat - a period without talking; offered the first night to prick the conscience of the pilgrims. Remember the Silent Retreat includes team members.

Celebration of Repentance - an examination of our life in light of the Gospel; offered the first night to stimulate serious self-reflection and self-awareness of our need to confess our failures.

Crosses - A cross common to the Cursillo® movement with a telling inscription "Christ is counting on you!"

Closing - The welcome of new participants into the community as a whole; designed to assure them that there are many brothers and sisters who understand

Fourth Day - The term used to describe all days following the three day weekend. The fourth day is used to work the Via de Cristo method

Group Reunion - A friendship and accountability meeting of 3 to 5 Via de Cristo supporters who review one another's fourth day work

Ultreya - A larger gathering of Via de Cristo supporters designed to encourage individuals to persevere in the fourth day.



From our TOG #5 Rectora

“God doesn’t call the prepared, He prepares the called.” Oh what words we need to live by! Now that a month has passed since Taste of Grace #5, I am able to collect my thoughts and reflect on that special time in my life. The above well-known phrase became my mantra while preparing for TOG #5. And now that the weekend is behind me, it’s time to open my ears and eyes to seeking out what God will have me do next. And when I decipher what that is, I will remember that even though I may not feel prepared, that will come in God’s time. Being Rectora for the past weekend taught me many things. I received many lessons in humility, grace, patience and love. But mostly it taught me a

lesson in faith. The culmination of the planning, trainings and weekend itself was a faith walk for me. I stepped out into faith and clung to God for His guidance and reassurance. Throughout the weekend I was reminded that above all, God is in control and that the weekend is indeed His time.

I am so thankful for the pilgrims that we had make the weekend. It was an honor serving God in this capacity just so that Claudia Brown, Vi Christensen, Linda Henize, Nichole Johnson Rodney, Susan Lacy and Janet Wisemiller may better know of God’s love and grace. I am also so thankful for all of the women who made up team of TOG #5. Without them, this past weekend

would not have been possible.

And now the baton has passed on to Scott Hoecker and Michele Koniewicz as they begin to prepare their TOG #6 journey. Please keep Michele and Scott in your prayers over the coming months as well as the pilgrims that God is already beginning to call to the fall weekends. The prayer vigil sign-up is already online, so please sign up early and sign up often!

You can sign up at <http://www.3dayol.org/Vigil/GetComm.phtml>

Summer blessings to you and yours! De Colores!

GLYASDI,

Amy Prior

Prayer Times Available for Fall '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



From our TOG #5 Rector

Recently I was asked the question, "What are the "Christian values" we can teach, or better yet, want our children to learn?" You know, something we can click off on our fingers and say we need to work on this or that one. The Boy Scouts have their Boy Scout Law, "A Scout is, trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent The Girl Scouts have their 'Girl Scout Law', "I will do my best to be, honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and .responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout" Our politicians talk of 'moral values' but in my best efforts I have not come up with an official list to which they are referring. Most discussions in the political realm slide from "moral values" to 'family values' that do a tunnel vision focus to sexuality issues of "abortion" and "gay rights" - all of which become subjective

and there is not enough ink in the world to adequately discuss the topic. But for those of us who claim a belief and trust in a Trinitarian God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit it would be good for each of us to memorize the Christian values that the Bible teaches. After all, we are expecting our Confirmands to learn these values and so much more.

The fact that I raise the questioning and you have to think about it indicates that it is not frequently taught and yet the Bible is very clear on Christian values. It calls them the "Fruit of the Spirit" In Galatians 5:22 and 23, we find, "22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." Did you get them?

"Love, Joy, Peace,
Patience, Kindness,
Goodness, Faithfulness,
Gentleness and
Self-control."

The fruit of the Spirit is the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit in us. The Spirit

produces these character traits that are found in the nature of Christ. They are the byproducts of Christ's control - we cannot obtain them by trying to get them without his help. If we want the fruit of the Spirit to grow in us we must join our lives to his (see John 15:4-5). We must know him, love him, remember him, and imitate him. As a result we will fulfill the intended purpose of the law—to love God and our neighbors." So, "Which of these qualities do you want the Spirit to produce in you?"

The choice we make is, 'Do we want to be conscious about how the Lord is living and moving in our lives while participating in fulfilling the ministry to which we have been called?' Recognizing and learning the unique gift God gives us in the different fruit of the Spirit (Christian values) may enable us to experience our growth in the Lord on a whole new level while helping us to identify and support others in their walk of faith.

Peace,
Gregg Bickus



How's your day going? How was work? How are you feeling? Etc. These are some of the questions you hear on a daily basis? They're pretty routine and we're all comfortable with them. Sometimes we elaborate with great details and other times a simple "fine" (always my favorite) will do. But what about those hard questions that don't get asked but are in dire need of some real answers? What are the hard questions? Well how about some of the following: How have you served God today? How have you praised God today? How have you repented of your sins today? How did you use the blessings God has given you to further His ministries in your area of influence today?

These may seem tough at times to answer but they are the daily questions we should be asking ourselves and other Christians. How can we move God's ministries forward if we aren't moving forward? Are you reuniting on a regular basis so that you can be held accountable? What passage did you read in the Bible today and what did it mean to you?

We have to be immersed in God's word to understand His will for us here on earth. It's not automatic! Read! Read the Bible, devotionals and pray daily. Sooner **than** later you'll start to view your world in a different light. Priorities will change.

People will notice. People will notice that you are changing. And you're changing because you're allowing God to be No. 1 in your life! God, in our life, changes us. We have more energy, a bounce in our step and a more pleasant outlook on life. God loves us and He wants us to succeed in life. He just has one condition, invite Him along for the journey!

That brings me to my final questions. Are you right financially with God? Do you tithe? Are you a first fruits giver? All Christians understand that God should be first in our lives, but our everyday sinning nature keeps us from that focus. So if you are not there yet, keep focused and praying for God's guidance. The riches God gives you should be shared by expanding His many ministries.

Taste of Grace is no different from many other non-profit, Christian organization, we need donated funds to operate. So when you get paid and tithe to your church body, if you're considering additional donations, prayerfully consider Taste of Grace.

Peace & DeColores,

Lenny Koniewicz
 TOG Treasurer



Ultreya Ultreya Ultreya

When: July 9th, 2005 5:00 pm Potluck, Worship to Follow

Where: Abundant Life Lutheran Church

23145 W. Lincoln Highway

Plainfield IL 60586

815-254-0250

Bring a dish to pass



PROPERTY REPORT AND REQUEST FOR NEEDED ITEMS

I'm grateful for the generous and spontaneous help from the following folks:

All who stayed late after TOG 5 to help load the trailer- Thank you!

Al and Peggy Ashby helped load the trailer and get all the TOG property to our house. They also picked up the trailer on short notice after it was unloaded.

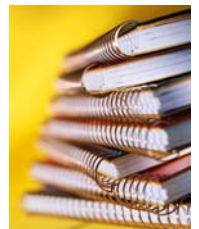
Keith Reed helped inventory all TOG property and organize it. Also, he put the entire inventory in a Word document to facilitate inventory tracking and future ordering of necessary items. Last, he helped attach an inventory sheet to each box used on the weekend (with the appropriate items highlighted for that box).

Speaking of necessary items... would you be willing to donate any of the following items (or do you know someone that might be willing)?

- Reams of White 8-1/2" by 11" paper



- New bibles and/or books dealing with Christian living for the book table
- Wooden storage case (with wheels) to store a computer, keyboard, printer and monitor. Approximate size required = 24" wide (fit through doorways) x 48" long x 24" tall.
- White Poster Board minimum 22"x28"
- 2 Staplers (standard for stapling paper)
- 1 tape dispenser (desk type)
- steno (stenographer) note books 6"x9" (new)
- 3 cases of individual bottles of drinking water
- 1 small bottle of communion wine (new)



If you have any of these items please call me at (815) 463-0332 or e-mail me at hoecker@comcast.net. Sincerely,
Scott Hoecker



From our Lay Director

Matthew 9 37 - 38 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

I'm sure you've heard this before, but have you remembered that we are the workers? Have you asked the Lord to send more workers to help us? That is what we mean when we say talk to God about that person before talking to the person about God. We are asking the Lord to send us more workers. Now is the time to start praying about that person you would like to sponsor. If you don't currently have anyone in mind to sponsor then pray and ask if there is someone you've missed who should be on the weekend. Please remember though that your time may not be God's time!

When you are talking to a married person, try to talk with both husband and wife. We want both husband and wife to make the decision together. Their applications should be turned in together.

Remember, the weekend is not for everyone. These three days cannot rectify every problem marriage, enthuse every disenchanted church member, cure disturbed persons, or make saints of sinners. Via de Cristo is designed to

change environments through Christian leaders. Pilgrims should at least know where the path is, if they are not already walking it.

Feel free to share with a potential pilgrim what VdC meant for you as fully as will help, realizing that all explanations will fall short. It's not that we are not allowed to tell what went on, but that it is difficult to explain. We want their experience to be fresh, especially regarding certain items and events which will hopefully be surprises.

Don't assume the person you are sponsoring will experience the same things you did. Each of us is at a different place on our spiritual journey. For some, the VdC experience will be a mountaintop, a new beginning. For others, it will be strengthening for the journey they are already on. We must not prejudge our pilgrims or set them up with unhelpful expectations.

To assure the applicant you are personally interested in their attending, make plans to bring them to the camp site for Send-Off. You're bringing them, helping them with suitcases and registration, and sharing in the Send-Off and Dedication of the Crosses is a form of prayer and sacrifice. Don't forget to be there at Clausura too! (cont. on page 10)



From our Lay Director (cont from page 9)

Remember that Scholarships are available. In the event that your Pilgrim needs some financial assistance with regards to the weekend fee, contact the Rector/a. We never turn pilgrims away due to financial hardship.

During the weekend, you and your family become a substitute for the pilgrim. Leave your phone number with their spouse. Do something special for them during the weekend like giving them a few hours during the day for personal time. Share a meal with them. Let the pilgrim's spouse know that you love and care for them.

You have responsibilities to the pilgrim. Pray for him/her during the weekend. Write him/her letters of prayers and

sacrifice and make sure others do likewise, especially those closest to them. Support your pilgrim with your prayers as you can during their weekend.

After the weekend, stay in contact and support the pilgrim you sponsor during their Fourth Day. Be responsible for getting them to the Ultreya following their Weekend. Take them to at least their first gathering. Help them become involved in a Reunion Group as soon as possible.

Being a sponsor can be hard work but it is what we are called to do. let's do it!

GLYASDI
Simon Prior
ToG Lay Director

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*.

GLYASDI
Debbie Claar ToG #1
Communications
815-436-1676
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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.





Calendar of Events

Scheduled Dates for Team Formation Meeting's

Team Formation Meetings will be from 8:30 am -4:30 pm
Saturday, August 6, 2005 at Peace Lutheran in New Lenox
Saturday, August 20, 2005 at St. Paul Lutheran in Streator
Saturday, September 10, 2005 at Our Savior's in Kankakee
Saturday, September 24, 2005 Yorkville location unconfirmed
Saturday, October 15, 2005 Seneca location unconfirmed



Oct 27-30, 2005 Fall Taste of Grace Men's Weekend #6

Scott Hoecker will be Rector

- Thursday Oct 27 7:00 pm Sendoff
Dedication of the crosses immediately following Send Off
- Saturday Oct 29 7:00 pm Serenade – practice begins at 6:00 pm
- Sunday Oct 30 4:00 pm Clausura

Nov 03-06, 2005 Living Waters Mixed Weekend at Camp Abe Lincoln

Jim and Lynn Shaw will be Rector and Rectora

Nov 10-13, 2005 Fall Taste of Grace Women's Weekend #6

Michele Koniewicz will be Rectora

- Thursday Nov 10 7:00 pm Sendoff
Dedication of the crosses immediately following Send Off
- Saturday Nov 12 7:00 pm Serenade – practice begins at 6:00 pm
- Sunday Nov 13 4:00 pm Clausura

Ultreya

July 9, 2005

Abundant Life Lutheran Church
23145 W. Lincoln Highway
Plainfield IL 60586 (new zip code effective 7/01/05)
815-254-0250
5:00 pm Pot Luck
Worship immediately following



September 10, 2005

Location to be determined

November 19, 2005

Location to be determined



The Taste
Newsletter for
Taste of Grace Via de Cristo

June 2005

Taste of Grace Via de Cristo Secretariat

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Treasurer

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4th Day

Amy Prior
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Weekend

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Spiritual Director

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Leaders

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Post-Weekend

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In the same way let your light shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16