

Weekend Talks

The main part of a Via de Cristo weekend centers around 9 talks given by laypersons and 5 by pastors. The talks include personal experience and are a living witness to the talk subjects.

Thursday

In Thursday's worship, two meditations are given: Know Yourself, an introspective look at our lives, what motivates us, and how we stand in relation to our God; the second is on the prodigal son parable in Luke, and how the Father sees his relationship to us, always happy to welcome us.

Friday

Friday morning's meditation is the "Three Glances of Christ," in which Jesus gazes at the Rich Young Ruler, Judas, and Peter in the midst of their denial with a look of love and longing. Five talks follow that day:

Ideal (Layperson)

We are encouraged to examine our priorities in life. What is our ideal? What goals do we set to reach it? What steps do we take to achieve it? Is it attainable?

Grace (Pastor)

God's "Ideal" is to love His creation. Grace is God's free gift of love to us. The Father is seen as always loving, always giving freely, no strings attached, always creating newness.

Laity (Layperson)

The nature of the church is defined; the local community is the nurturing, sending Body of Christ. Pastor and Laity work together to accomplish the mission of Christ -- to "go and tell." Ministry is the vocation of every believer.

Grace II (Pastor)

God's grace, showered on all, also is poured out in real, tangible ways in each of our lives -- in relationships with spouse, children, friends. God's Spirit is in us to enable us to believe and to love. God's grace overflows our lives to touch other lives through our ministry to others.

Piety (Layperson)

Various kinds of piety and piety are presented, both false and genuine. We discover that we are practicing some forms of piety, even though not feeling "pious." Piety is seen as totally directing our entire life to God as we worship, study, grow, and serve.

Saturday

Saturday morning's meditation is "The Figure of Christ." Here Christ as both God and Man is presented. Jesus is the "word made flesh dwelling among us." Jesus is completely God, existing before He created this universe, and completely human; He was born as any other child, He lived the life we live, and He willingly died, and rose from the dead, bearing God's grace to us in love. This theme is enlarged upon during the talks:

Study (Layperson)

The role and need for study in nurturing our spiritual life are explored. The goal and purpose of study, with the obstacles to overcome, are discussed along with the resources available to enrich our understanding of the faith. References to books, Bible studies, devotionals, tapes, etc. are provided.

Means of Grace, Word and Sacrament (Pastor)

God's word is a living, active presence in our daily living and His word is also enfolded in sacrament. Here Christ is seen to be THE Sacrament. As in water, bread, and wine, earthly elements in which grace is imparted, so in the earthly body of Christ is God's grace made real and personal, "given for you." Baptism and Holy Communion, the two Sacraments, are discussed at length. Some emphasis is also given to the special times in our lives in which we experience the love and grace of God in deeply meaningful ways, for example, birth, confirmation, marriage, and death.

Action (Layperson)

The apostles' action in "going into all the world" is the model for examining our evangelical vocation. We are encouraged to act in a way that fits our personality to "Make a friend, be a friend, and make another a friend of Christ." (Friendship evangelism)

Obstacles (Pastor)

The things (sin) that keep us from being aware of God's grace and following Him are presented: the devil, the world, our flesh. We are the ones who do not allow Christ's atonement to overcome the obstacles; God's grace is sufficient.

Leaders (Layperson)

The definition and qualities of a leader are presented as well as the spiritual qualities of a Christian leader. No one possesses all of the qualities, but each possesses enough to be used in ministry to influence and lead others to Christ.

Sunday

Sunday morning's meditation, "Christ's Message to the Via de Cristo participant," begins with the account of the transfiguration and ends with the descent from the mountain back into life and ministry. Likewise we will descend from the mountain and go back to home, job, community, church, and the nitty-gritty of our daily lives. The five talks that follow build on this theme:

Environment (Layperson)

What individuals can do to relate to, enrich, and/or change the environment in which we live, work, and play; how we can be a leavening agent in our families, at work, at church, in small groups, with our friends; how we can bring Christ into all environments.

Life in Grace (Pastor)

Sustaining our life of action takes regular feeding and encouragement and training -- all provided within the community of faith, the church. Worship, prayer, family devotions, and a weekly plan of action are presented. We are encouraged to be part of a small group to support, encourage, and nurture each other while living in God's grace.

Christian Community in Action (Layperson)

Here the content of the Action Talk is enlarged upon. The heart and soul of Christian Community is apostolic action, something we never do alone. There is strength in community which empowers us to act. Practical resources are offered.

Total Security in the Fourth Day (Layperson)

How we find security in life is compared with the total security we have been promised by God. We tap that security through others of the Body of Christ in all walks of life by sharing our pilgrimage, encouraging, building up, strengthening, and loving each other. How to form a small group is presented. After this third day, we resume our daily lives -- on the fourth day. Our vocation (calling), issued in Baptism, moves us to mission. It won't be easy. We are encouraged to be a leaven, not a bomb, in our home community, and to serve without being discouraged.