

What is Via de Cristo?

Via de Cristo (Way of Christ) is an inspiring three day spiritual renewal experience that is designed to awaken Christian faith. The method of presentation for the weekend is the Lutheran version of the Cursillo (pronounced Curseeo) method that originated in the Roman Catholic Church in Spain in the late 1940's and has since been used in adapted form by other Christian denominations.

What makes this form of spiritual re-newal experience different from others?

Cursillo means "short course" in Spanish. The weekend is an intense review of basic principles of Christianity presented in such a special way that even those who have had many years of active participation in church work find it inspiring and learn to live more effective Christian lives. The method of Cursillo (and Via de Cristo) awakens awareness of God's presence in daily life.

Who should attend?

Via de Cristo is intended for the spiritual renewal of people who are currently actively participating in the work of a Christian church. It is not intended to convert non-Christians or to deal with cases where participants have recently faced major crises in their lives. While Via de Cristo was established by Lutherans, participants from other denominations are permitted and encouraged to attend since the weekend deals with the basic Christian principles which most denominations accept.

Why should an active Christian attend a Via de Cristo weekend?

Peoples' lives are filled with so many problems requiring decisions and they are bombarded by so much information from the news media that their understanding of Christian commitment becomes fragmented and diffuse. Carrying out duties to family, job, and church becomes mechanical and eventually without much enthusiasm. The Via de Cristo weekend provides an opportunity to temporarily shut off the bombardment of information from other sources and permits total concentration on Christianity. It is this total immersion in Christian principles and God's grace for three days that permits the participant to refocus his or her life. The weekend is filled with singing, praying, listening, re-reflecting, discussing, laughing, and sharing love in the context of the Christian tradition.

Who is responsible for putting on the weekends?

Local organizations that carry out the preparation and administration of the weekends are made up of lay people and clergy who have previously attended similar weekends and are familiar with the Cursillo method. **Living Water** is the name of the organization located in the Iowa-Illinois Quad Cities. There are others in other parts of the United States and together they form the National Lutheran Secretariat for Via de Cristo. The local organizations operate independent of, but in cooperation with local churches. Clergy from local churches act as the spiritual directors and counselors for the Via de Cristo weekends.

What type of weekends are there?

While men and women struggle with many of the same issues in their relationship with

God, there are some aspects of these issues that are unique to each. We hold co-ed weekends where men and women attend at the same time but are housed separately and there are single gender weekends held one week apart. The preference for which type of weekend would be best is up to the individual or couple.

Why is it strongly urged that husbands and wives attend on successive weekends or on co-ed weekend?

They can then share their experiences with each other and it can have a positive influence on their marriage. If one partner is unable to attend a particular weekend but could at a later date it might be better for both to wait. However, if it appears that one partner may never attend, the other is permitted to attend if their pastor believes that it will not harm their marriage.

How many weekends are held each year?

Currently there is one co-ed weekend each fall and one for men and one for women each spring.

Does everyone need a sponsor?

Yes, sponsors are involved in some guidance and assistance before, during, and after the weekend. Sponsors are people who have attended Via de Cristo or Cursillo weekends before. Applicants who do not have a sponsor will be assigned one when they apply.

What happens after the Weekend?

It is assumed that the renewed person will return to active participation in the congrega-

gation or parish from which they came. In addition, opportunities are provided for those who have attended a weekend to continue to get together with friends that they met on the weekend. Small groups of four or five people are encouraged to meet weekly to share experiences that they have had in serving God. Six times a year, usually on alternate months, all of those who have been involved in Via de Cristo are invited to get together for an evening to share a potluck supper, attend a worship service, and discuss the events of their lives.

Is there a limit to the number of participants on a particular weekend from the same congregation or parish?

The current rule adopted for the Living Water Via de Cristo organization is that no more than ten to twenty percent of the participants on a given weekend can come from the same congregation or parish unless all of the spaces have not been filled. At this time space limitations are such that this translates to a maximum of 6 on a co-ed weekend or 3 men and three women on a same gender weekends

Where can more information and application forms be obtained?

Speakers who have been involved in Via de Cristo are available for presentations to church groups. A videotape about Via de Cristo is also available. To schedule speakers and/or the videotape or to obtain application forms, please contact one of the following:

1. The Via de Cristo representative at your church.
2. Living Water Pre-Weekend Co-Chairpersons, Jerry and Krista Hanson, 1624 S Main St Princeton, IL 61356 (815-875-2359) jandkhanson@msn.com
3. livingwaterviadecristo.org

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Questions and Answers

about

Living Water Via de Cristo



Inspirational Weekends