



CLAIMING OUR VIA DE CRISTO MISSION WITHOUT CHANGING OUR ESSENTIALS

By Pastor Doug Givan, INKY Secretariat Spiritual Director and NLS Spiritual Director from 2008-2012.

The word “essential” is defined as “absolutely necessary, extremely important” by Merriam-Webster. The attached list of our VDC essentials consists of the necessary and important parts of our 3-day weekend.

Everything related to and part of the Via de Cristo movement centers itself on GRACE!! God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense (g.r.a.c.e.) is what the VDC stands for. The Via de Cristo mission statement: “BY GRACE, with the Holy Spirit, we challenge leaders to discover and achieve their personal calling, assisting them to influence others!!” (National Lutheran Secretariat website at www.viadecristo.org).

So, as you look at the list of the Essentials, please remember grace as you check your Secretariat against this list. Some of these things may be totally new to you, some of them may be disagreeable but these are the list of Essentials.

Either way, we claim a new era for the Via de Cristo. As we all come out of the Pandemic (and still wrestle with the variants) we come out new! “God is doing a new thing”, says Isaiah 43:19, and it’s up to us to bring

the new thing God is doing into our local Secretariat ministry. God in Christ gives new energy to try new things, let go of the old, and be open and flexible to possibilities.

Time doesn't allow me to go through all of the list of Essentials, but to highlight:

Holy Communion: we worship, as God's people on a VDC weekend and having the Holy Table set for Communion is a key. Despite what some might say, we can never have "too much" of Jesus! When we receive (we do not "take" Communion, we receive) the Body and Blood of Christ we do so "to remember Jesus!" Holy Communion is offered each morning during Worship and provided to kitchen team and any others after the service by one of the SD's.

Discussions/Posters: another essential is adequate, unrushed time at the table for the pilgrims to discuss what they heard from the Rollo and draw their poster! This is key to developing their small groups skills and speaking up and out for themselves. Table helpers (chas) need to be aware of those who try to control and those who are really quiet so everyone has an even chance to participate.

Silent Retreat: Isn't that how the Christmas hymn goes? "Silent Night, All is Bright." At the conclusion of the evening Chapel service the Rector announces a Silent Retreat from then until the next morning. This will allow God to work in the hearts and minds of the pilgrims, and the team. This is important to get the weekend off to a good start.

Celebration of Repentance: A specific time set aside to celebrate the persons own individual "Grace!" This understanding of God's love turns the spiritual lights on and allows the person to perceive this new thing God is doing in their lives. This can be organized by the Rector, spoken about in Worship, or other ways.

4th Day, Renewal Group (or some call Reunion Group), Ultreya: these are all needed activities and events to keep the fire lit for the new pilgrim as well as for the wider VDC community in your area and region. The Sunday rollos need to be focused on sending the Pilgrim back out into the world to impact their environment.

We need to stay together, across the country and the world, as God's Beloved children of Via de Cristo! God loves you and so do I!

Discussion questions for the Breakout Rooms:

- 1) What is the "new thing" God is doing in your Secretariat regarding the Essentials?**

- 2) Which of these Essentials is your Secretariat doing, or not doing and how will you integrate these?**