



Keynote Address: Rev. Joe Nilsen
It's Not about the Experience, It's about the Journey



Following the opening worship, Rev. Doug Givan introduced, Rev. Joe Nilsen. Joe attended the second Lutheran Cursillo© weekend in 1972, Men's #2 where he sat at the Table of Peter. He has been actively involved in VdC for the

last 40 years, including serving as our National Spiritual Director.

Joe sees many challenges in the future for VdC. He encouraged the delegates and the guests to do all that can be done to preserve and promote this precious gift of God. In listening to an interview with author and seminary professor Lauren Winter on the radio, Joe discovered his theme for the keynote address: ***"It's not about the experience, it's about the journey."***

According to Joe, we often make the experience of the weekend the most important thing. "We need to dispel the notion that the weekend stands alone." That is not our message; "it's not about the experience, it's about the journey."

Joe offered a challenge to the audience: "Refocus the energy from the weekend to the Fourth Day. We will not taste the full bounty of God's grace until we do the Fourth Day as well as we do the weekend." Joe also encouraged attendees to look for the power of the Holy Spirit to be unleashed in our lives and in our movement through such things as reunion groups, where members hold each other accountable.

"We should say (to the pilgrims), 'Welcome to the table! May this be the beginning of a rich journey,'" Joe told the group.

"It's not our work," Joe emphasized. "It's the Spirit's work. As we look towards our next 40 years, what will we do to preserve this gift for coming generations?" Joe said that while the essentials must remain the same, our style can and must change. "Churches have always ministered to the people of their times. Living the gospel through the years has had to take many twists and turns." For example,

Cursillo started out just for men, so allowing women to attend was one of the first major changes.

Joe wondered what we can do to bring VdC to Gen-x'ers? Can we hold a weekend just for one congregation? Or for a group of congregations? How can we utilize technology?

"When the essentials are present, the message is blessed," Joe pointed out. We shouldn't be fearful of trying something new, such as using PowerPoint slides or pre-printed write-downs.

Joe then noted that the future of VdC also depends on our unity as a group. NLS exists, Joe said, to support and enhance the efforts of the local secretariats.

"We must move to the next step in order to be fully effective – and that is the hiring of a national executive director. There is an elephant in the room, the \$1,000,000 needed to accomplish this. This is not God's obstacle; it's ours." Joe pointed out there are many ways to raise this money.

Joe spoke of one last change as VdC moves forward. "We must dispel the secrecy that has surrounded our movement. We have nothing to protect, but everything to proclaim in our weekends." He encouraged telling prospective pilgrims that there are three days, lots of good talks, lots of good worship, lots of good food. You can let some things be surprises.

"Piety, study and action are God's gift to the church." Joe said, "I cannot imagine my life or my ministry without Via de Cristo. My comments today have come out of a deep love of this movement and for my brothers and sisters in it."

Joe is a retired Lutheran parish pastor, who says God has led him into far more ministries since retiring than he ever had in his working years. When not serving in some capacity, Joe enjoys traveling, refurbishing houses and reading and writing. He has two books available, a novel, ***Lost and Found*** and a book of reflections on parish ministry titled, ***Got a Minute, Pastor?*** Joe and his wife of 52 years, Evy, live in Tennessee. They have two children and two grandchildren.

ORIENTATION



Over 65 first-timers to NLSAM, as well as several “old timers” were treated to an entertaining and informative orientation by Carolyn Hawkins, NLS VP of Administration, who encouraged everyone to bring a spirit of **idealism, cooperation** and **charity** to this, the 31st annual meeting. This year we are also celebrating 40 years of holding Lutheran-based weekends.

Our keynote speaker Pastor Joe Nilsen is a gentleman who was instrumental in those early Lutheran weekends. We celebrate that the NLS currently has 44 secretariats, operating in 30 states, and that through 2011 there have been over 102,000 Cursilistas making weekends, including over 3200 clergy.

Acronyms were explained: NLS is National Lutheran Secretariat, EB stands for the Executive Board, AM is Annual Meeting and HC is Host Committee. A map of the campus was reviewed and participants were encouraged to **STAY HYDRATED**.

The dining hall at Regis has 4 stations with (sometimes) different cuisines, so we do **NOT** need to form one line. Instead, we were encouraged to go where traffic isn't: the staff say they can serve 100 people in 15 minutes! There is even a celiac-friendly or gluten free area and they serve lots of local and organic produce. On Friday we will be doing a forum in the dining hall after dinner, and attendees are encouraged to try to sit with other members of their small group for dinner.

Gathering music will be played for 15 minutes prior to each worship service. There will be just one offering, on Saturday **MORNING**. Photos were taken Thursday evening, on the patio between Main Hall and the chapel: one of first-timers and one of all participants.

The campus does not allow golf carts, so the Host Committee has rented 15 wheelchairs, and has cheerful volunteers to assist those who need a ride over the distances. Please use them, and **DON'T FORGET TO STAY HYDRATED**.

The Host Committee Communications team is happy to assist attendees in printing boarding passes. Come to Rm. 211, second floor of the Student Center. **DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!**



NLS BOARD 2012

Regis University History

In 1877, a group of exiled Italian Jesuits started Las Vegas College in Las Vegas, New Mexico. In 1884, the Bishop of Denver invited the Jesuits to create a college at Morrison where Sacred Heart College already existed. In 1887, the two colleges merged: a donor promised to grant the land comprising the present campus if the brothers could build their first college building in 100 days. Main Hall was built within the required 100 days!

The merged colleges moved to this location, and continued educating young men under the name of College of the Sacred Heart until 1921, when it became Regis College. In 1991, it was renamed Regis University and consists of three colleges, spread over seven campuses in Colorado, and one in Henderson (Las Vegas) area, Nevada.



BUSINESS MEETING #1

The first of four business meetings started with introductions from Regis University and a representative from Thrivent Financial. Roberta Wentworth, the fundraising chair of the host committee spoke on behalf of Thrivent, reminding us of their display in the Student Center. Each delegate was formally “seated” and represented secretariats from all over the United States. Board members gave overviews of their individual reports, which can be found in the notebooks. Diane Purcell, the NLS Financial Advisor announced that she is here to help with her “talent that comes with the grace of God instead of an attorney’s fee.”

Rick Hanzlik, the NLS Web Servant, spoke on the improvements made to the webpage and the addition of face book and twitter to our social media presence. These pages can be found at www.facebook.com/viadecristonls and www.twitter.com/viadecristonls. Each of the board members expressed excitement about advising secretariats with any need that may arise. The business meeting then moved on to an explanation of the election process and the positions available; VP Administration, Spiritual Director and Treasurer. Forms for nominations are available in the Communications office located on the second floor of the Student Center. Forms for nominations must be filled out and turned in by the second business meeting at 11:15 a.m. Friday.

Opening Morning Worship

In a spirit-filled setting on a beautiful day, the 2012 NLSAM Worship Team led the opening worship service with 15 minutes of heart-warming and Spirit-moving gathering music. Presiding Pastor Doug Brauner welcomed Pastor Steve Hartten, Spiritual Director of the Via de Cristo of the Rockies. Pastor Steve delivered the sermon, using 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 as the springboard for his message. First, he asked attendees if they could name three marks of a faithful life. He reminded us that as the gyroscope was the leveling and steadying mechanism that guided the astronauts in space, so JOY is that mechanism in a Christian's life. Our joyful message to others is simple: Jesus loves you, and you are part of God's family. Sustained by that love and joy, we are able to weep with those who weep; we are able to go through personal tragedies of our own and of our loved ones, still rejoicing. Founded on faith, nourished by prayer, rejoicing is the gyroscope that guides us through the ups and downs, even in the face of seemingly inexplicable events. After the message, Doug Givan, NLS Spiritual Director, performed the commissioning of this year's delegates.



Thursday Evening Rejoicing Service

Thursday evening's Rejoicing Service was intense yet created a peaceful silence as Ginger Clark began her solo. Her performance of *Via Dolorosa*, was powerful and moving to say the least. The singer herself was almost brought to tears. "I felt like I was going to cry," Clark explained as she pointed up to the crucifix in the St. John Francis Regis Chapel. "Look who I was singing to." Clark is from Colorado Springs, Colorado and confessed laughingly that she began singing at six months old. Her mother watched her sing along with the jingles until she fell asleep in front of the television. The NLSAM is blessed to have such an expressive and joyous worship team this year! As stated in the service's scripture reading, John 16: 23-24; *Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*



Prayer Chapel and Poster Chapel at Regis

See the pretty birdhouses around? Those are for your prayer requests, according to Ro Fesser, DM, and head Palanca for our weekend. The birdhouses are located across from the elevators on each floor in the dorm, on the registration table in the student center, and at the entrances to the science amphitheater and classrooms. You will also find paper and pencils close by. Fill out a slip with your prayer request and place it in the birdhouse. Ro and her team will collect the requests several times a day and will pray those requests repeatedly over the weekend. Those pretty birdhouses will be auctioned off Saturday night, with proceeds going to the NLS.

Feel free to visit the Prayer Chapel from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm daily. Ro says it's a quiet, contemplative place and open for prayer. The Prayer Chapel is in the West Hall Conference Room. Look for the sign on the sidewalk about mid-way between West Hall and the Dining Room.

Ro feels strongly about the power of prayer and says, "Here in Colorado, we've had recent evidence that evil is real. It's not pretend, it's not a comic book. Through the power of prayer, others are being exposed to the healing of God and are discovering hope." As evidence of that, she points to the quick response of the Denver Lutherans in organizing two prayer vigils within hours of the recent theater shooting. Many other prayer vigils were also organized quickly.

Ro also invites you to visit the Poster Chapel, located above the Dining Room. The posters for all attendees to sign and will be given to each of the 44 secretariats represented here. What a great way to pray for each other – and to have a reminder to pray for each other throughout the year.

REMINDERS.....

- **VERY IMPORTANT:** Dorm access card and room key: There is a **\$35.00** (lost key) and **\$35.00** (lost security pass) replacement charge. Please return your key before leaving Regis.
- Computer usage and internet access is unsecured: WIFI is “free”; just select Regis.net-internet-access
- Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices and no flash photos during worship services.
- Palanca Posters are available to sign on the 2nd floor foyer of the Student Center
- Palanca Chapel is located in the West Hall Conference room.
- The host committee can be found wearing beaded lanyards
- If your transportation plans change, please let the host committee know.
- Wheelchairs are here to assist you in transportation between buildings.
- High Altitude Sickness???. Please read through the valuable information in your notebooks.
- An offering will be received at the Saturday Morning Worship Service. Checks can be written out to the NLS.

NLSAM 2012
Participants arriving
at the Denver, CO



EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

The emergency phone number to give to your family and friends at home is Carol McGill's cell: **303-772-6434**. Nonemergency campus assistance call: **303-964-5483** and all for all **Emergency only** call: **303-458-4122**.

Schedule for Friday, July 27, 2012			
Time	Event	Building	Location
6:30 a.m.	Breakfast	G: Stu Cntr	Dining Hall
8:00 a.m.	Worship	E: Regis	Chapel
9:15 p.m.	Lutheran Forum	E: Regis	Chapel
9:55 p.m.	Small Group Sharing	E: Regis	Chapel
11:15 a.m.	Business Meeting #1	J: Science	Amphitheater
12:30 p.m.	Lunch	G: Stu Cntr	Dining Hall
1:30 p.m.	Seminars	I: Loyola	Page 2-3 in notebook
2:45 p.m.	Regional Meetings	I: Loyola	Page 2-3 in notebook
4:00 p.m.	Dialogues & Committees	G & I	Page 2-3 in notebook
5:00 p.m.	Dinner	G: Stu Cntr	Dining Hall
6:00 p.m.	Best Practices Forum	G: Stu Cntr	Dining Hall
6:45 p.m.	Small Group Sharing	G: Stu Cntr	Dining Hall
8:30 p.m.	Evening Vespers	E: Regis	Chapel
9:00 p.m.	Fellowship & Hospitality	G: Stu Cntr	West Hall/Patio



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CONEXIONES is the official publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, a national association of the Via de Cristo (Way of Christ) movement, representing over 102,070 who have participated in 44 movements across the U.S. The purpose of this publication is to inform the delegates about the activities of the Annual Meeting.

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