



**FORUM: LIVING THE JOURNEY**



Our speaker, Ro Fesser was introduced by Ed Broestl, NLS Board Member and current President. Residing presently in Fort Collins, CO; Ro has been walking her journey as a Cursillista for 10 years. Blessed to have served in four different communities; her experience started at the Heart of Illinois, and continued at Rivers Edge, Colorado VDC, and currently is at VDC of the Rockies. She shared that her journey began simply, at an Applebee's Restaurant when a friend handed her an application to attend a weekend.

Ro's talk began with a story about a man who dies and is met by St. Peter in Heaven. There he discovers a room full of unopened gifts from God that many had failed to open and receive before they died. We were challenged, to consider what gifts given to us have we not opened?

At VDC we learned the gifts of piety, study, action are the foundation of our call to discipleship. Discipleship is a choice and Ro reminded us and paraphrased Thursday's keynote:

*Come to get & Go to give...the exhaustive way to discipleship*  
 Or *Come to go...the empowering way to mature discipleship.*

She then asked a number of challenging questions such as: "Do you respect, care for, and love those in need?" "How do you disciple others in the midst of a crisis?" She suggests that if we have been practicing piety, study and action then we have what we need, our life preserver. These gifts help us develop as disciples.

**Piety**

Through growth and development we are building relationships with God and others. Piety is a dynamic relationship with God. It is intentional faith; it's totally relational. Piety is a mindful piece of our life and it is a practiced way to be so on a daily basis. What if our focus was only on Sunday versus every day? When piety is lived out we are able to share our personal testimony.

How to share your personal testimony?

1. Speak about your life before your spiritual awakening,
2. Give accounts of the events, leading up to the commitment and change.
3. Describe the actual encounter or surrender experience.

4. Share your rejoicing of new life following the event.

**Study**

Through growth and development, we learn what is needed and how our stories are intertwined. It's the story of "we" and "us". It is through Bible Study that we learn and understand what to expect in relationships; to trust how things can come together. Then we believe and accept in making things come together. Through study we are part of the Holy, we are called to holiness, and we must serve in holiness. To be able to talk to others about God, we have to study. Faith comes by hearing, reading and learning.

**Action**

As Christian Leaders we get to do Christian Action, being appointed by God! The cross moves us from action to *Apostolic Action*. We are to do it responsibly, building the kingdom of God and an atmosphere to grow love, healing, and renewal. Jesus got away to renew and then went back to disciple His followers. Every human act is directed by God; knowing Him in the act, wanting Him in the act, and doing Him in the act. All the way He wants it done!

In closing, Ro gave us a reminder and a challenge. On our VdC weekend we heard; "Christ is counting on you!" and we responded "I am counting on Christ!" As a disciple appointed by God, Christ is counting on you. What's your call to apostolic action? You have the free will to choose. Are you choosing to open the gifts of God and use them?

Small group discussions followed and we were invited to use any or all of the following questions:

1. How have you answered your personal calling as a disciple influencing your environment with the Gospel?
2. What gifts (piety, study, apostolic action) have you consistently used that strengthened your skills as a disciple. What gifts are rusty from lack of use or have been forgotten? What might be gifts that you have never opened?
3. How has Christ counted on you and you counted on Christ living the journey as a disciple?



## FRIDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Nearly 200 NLSAM 2013 attendees filled the DeSantis Family Chapel with prayer and song to begin Friday activities. They were greatly blessed by the inspiring personal testimony from Deacon Faye Sommers, a deacon at the Chapel of St Andrews and chaplain of the chapel's school and the message by Pastor Gerry Olsen of Victory Church. Pastor Gerry is also the Host Committee Spiritual Director. Both St Andrews and Victory Church are in Boca Raton, FL.



Deacon Faye's journey with Christ began before she was born. God was with her from the beginning. He was with her in 1993 where, as a single mom, she moved from California to Boca Raton with her three young children. Deacon Faye's growing awareness of a personal relationship with Christ; her realization that he had been there all along, completely changed her life. She became a new creature

in Christ, reborn in streams of living water. God had a plan. He equipped her to listen and follow "Only God could have placed people and opened doors...", as she simultaneously pursued the goals of Chapel deacon and school chaplain – ultimately realized in August 2007. Now Chaplain Faye "drinks from the living water on a daily basis." Her final exhortations to attendees: "Drink from these living waters today and for the rest of your life."

Following a rousing rendition of "All My Fountains", including an acapella verse, led by Janet Cunningham and the music team, we were inspired by Pastor Gerry's sermon based on Psalms 1:13 and John 4:1-13; the story of the woman at the well. Regally arrayed in his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday tie-dye rainbow shirt, Pastor Gerry reminded us that we are located just one mile from a great body of water – the ocean – in Florida, the sink-hole capital of the world. He related that underground streams create cave-ins, analogous to the spiritual collapse that failure and disillusionment can create. "How can I avoid the 'sinkhole syndrome' and spiritual dehydration?" he asked.

Pastor Gerry's compelling personal story began in the Bronx as the child of a non-religious Jewish mother and an alcoholic Catholic father. He used his own journey through difficult times and those of others to relate that God gives us the strength and will to survive and thrive, and that only when you desire God as deeply as you need air; only when you have a compelling thirst for the Living God, can you truly know Christ. Pastor Gerry reminded us that the woman at the well only felt truly refreshed when she shared her encounter with Christ with others. Likewise, grouping helps Cristo members to avoid spiritual thirst. "When thirsty, return to the well."

Following Pastor Gerry's sermon, worshipers expressed our statement of faith in the words of the hymn, *Because We Believe*: "We are the church and we stand as one."



## FRIDAY, July 26, 2013 - Business Meeting #3

The third business meeting of the weekend started with prayer followed by brief introductions of the current candidates for the National Secretariat. Each candidate was invited to provide a brief introduction of limited duration. The two offices under consideration during this election cycle are the Secretary and Vice President of Outreach. While each candidate comes from different geographical areas and have diverse service experience, all shared and acknowledged having sought God's will in their decision to seek office and exhibited the requisite humility in deferring to the qualification and competence of the other, while requesting the body's prayerful consideration and a vote if so led by God.

The candidates for Secretary are *Alice Allison* and *Terry Sanders*. The candidates for Vice President for Outreach are *Steve Manasca*, *Wendy Showalter*, and *Tedd Smith*.

Honored by the nomination and gifted with an outgoing personality and detail oriented management style, Alice Allison discussed the importance of others feeling welcome and supported and her unique ability to facilitate this as Secretary.

Humbled by and called to the nomination, Terry Sanders acknowledged that while outside his comfort zone, he was confident that his professional experience and job related skills would enable him to faithfully and competently execute the duties of the office.

Each candidate professed their readiness, willingness and ability to serve in the respective capacities. Ballots will be distributed tomorrow.

The balance of the meeting concerned the recent discussions concerning proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Lutheran Secretariat. While the proposed amendments to the Constitution were summarily ratified by the body, the proposed amendments to the Bylaws required substantially more discussion. The proposed amendment regarding the Executive Director was ratified with some dissent.

The Bylaws were approved without section 5.1 adjustments. After much discussion regarding the pros and cons of officers' terms being two or three years, there was a vote to end discussion of the revision. This leaves the officers' terms at two years and renewable for an additional two years.

The meeting was brought to a close with an entertaining skit concerning Rediscover Recommit. A must see, but you'll want to bring an extra shirt or two.



SYMBOLS:  
Tony Appleby and  
Karen Bennefeld  
[symbols.com](http://symbols.com)

**FORUM: LIVING THE JOURNEY**



Larry Witham, from Western North Carolina VdC presented, "Sharing the Journey". He stated that our goal is to develop leaders who will return to their home churches. Sponsorship is not only a joy, but also a great responsibility.

Larry shared that prayer is important prior to asking anyone. Sponsorship is a dynamic partnership between you and God. When talking to a possible attendee, use gentleness and reassurance. Attending a Via de Cristo weekend is a beautiful gift that can be received by the attendee. Talk with God first about your friend before talking to your friend about attending the weekend.

The notebook contains handouts of a detailed checklist of the sponsor's responsibility, which is used in North Carolina. Secretariats that don't have such a checklist are welcome to use it. Larry discussed some helpful hints about obtaining palanca letters which is another very important responsibility of the sponsor.

Take time to share with the attendee what will be happening on the weekend; i.e being assigned to a room and table, listening to talks, both from lay and Pastors, discussions, poster making. As a sponsor you are to answer any questions openly and honestly that they might have. Remind them to leave electronics at home; a computer, phones, I-pads, watches, etc. A sponsor's responsibility is to take away any attendee distractions that might interfere with the weekend. Just don't tell them about the 3 surprises; the silence, the serenade and the palanca. Finding a reunion group following the weekend is vital. In summary, prayer is the utmost important thing that you can do for the person you are sponsoring. Small group discussions followed with the following questions;

1. Who should we not consider sponsoring?
2. What resources are available to use to seek candidates and spread information about VdC?
3. What should we consider in approaching clergy candidates?

**SPECIAL REQUEST from**

**Host Committee:** As a courtesy to next year's hosting Secretariat, we would appreciate you returning your 3-ring binder and plastic name tag holder upon checkout on Sunday. You can keep all the papers and the paper name tag, but your palanca of the notebook binder and name tag holder for use next year will save the host committee money. Thank you for your help!



**FRIDAY EVENING WORSHIP**

As the sun sets on another full day in sunny West Palm Beach Florida, we celebrate our Lord with the Worship Choir tonight. What a beautiful celebration! Thinking about the songs we sang tonight, songs of exaltation and the majesty of God who redeemed us. "To the King, the eternal wise King," "How great is our God," Lord we come to you" will likely fill you with awe.

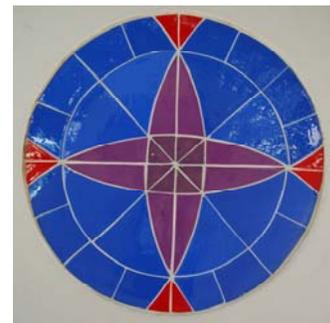
Tedd & Billie Smith shared with us Psalm 42 "As the deer pants for flowing streams, my soul thirsts for you". We were also taught a new version of singing the Lord's Prayer written by our worship leader Janet Cunningham. Did you feel like you entered the throne room tonight?

Tedd shared from Revelation 7:9-17. "ALL were worshipping God. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."



We continued to worship with "Just As I Am," and "Still". That was followed by the "Revelation Song," with the words, *Yes we adore you Lord, to you the only wise King, Holy Holy is the Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come.* Reverberating through the chapel my voices rose in praise. More celebration continued with "We Will Dance"; *we will dance on the streets that are golden.... in the song of the Lamb.*

What an awesome God we serve and what a great celebration to end the day. DeColores!



**REMINDERS.....**

- **VERY IMPORTANT: All dormitory rooms must be cleaned out and vacated by 9 am on Sunday Morning.** Palm Beach Atlantic University is hosting another large group immediately after ours. The host team will have a place to store luggage before final departure. Additional information about cleaning your room is in your notebooks.
- There is a **\$100.00** (lost key) and **\$100.00** (lost security pass) replacement charge. Please return these to registration before leaving West Palm Beach.
- Computer usage and internet access does not require a password: WIFI is “free”, select **PBAGuest** or **PBAStudent**.
- During worship and meetings, please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices. Please no flash photos during worship services.
- Palanca Posters are available to sign on the 2nd floor foyer of the Lassiter Student Center
- Palanca Chapel is also located on the 2nd floor of the Lassiter Student Center
- If your transportation plans change, please let the host committee know at registration.
- An offering will be received at the Saturday Morning Worship Service to support our Executive Director’s expenses. Checks can be written out to the NLS.
- Evaluations can be turned in at the registration desk or Baxter Lobby.

The daily NLSAM newsletters can be found on the NLS website:  
[www.viadecristo.org](http://www.viadecristo.org)

You can find us also on FB and twitter;  
**viadecristonls**

Emergency Numbers:  
**Beverly Abt;**  
 954-815-4764  
**Watson Ray;**  
 561-308-9438



Schedule for Saturday, July 27, 2013			
Time	Event	Building	Location
6:45 a.m.	Breakfast	24 LSC	Dining Hall
8:15 a.m.	Worship	3 DFC	Chapel
9:30 a.m.	Strengthening our Journey Together	24	Weyenberg Center
11:00 a.m.	Business Meeting #4	18 MH	MacArthur 1291/1292
12:30 p.m.	Lunch	24 LSC	Dining Hall
1:30 p.m.	Best Practices Forum-small group	24	Weyenberg Center
3:00 p.m.	Dialogues	17 or 18	Rinker/MacArthur
4:00 p.m.	Regional Meeting #2	18 MH	MacArthur 1291/1292
5:30 p.m.	Dinner	24 LSC	Dining Hall
7:00 p.m.	Regional Meeting #3 (opt.)	17 or 18	Rinker/MacArthur
8:00 p.m.	Evening Vespers	3 DFC	Chapel
	Fellowship & Hospitality	24 LSC	First Floor

3 =DFC - DeSantis Family Chapel; 24 =LSC - Lassiter Student Center; 18 =MH - MacArthur Hall

Vol. 21.3    Saturday July 27 2013

**CONEXIONES** is the official publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, a national association of the Via de Cristo (Way of Christ) movement, representing over 104,235 who have participated in 46 movements across the U.S. The purpose of this publication is to inform the delegates about the activities of the Annual Meeting.

Conexiones Editor:  
 Judy Laabs-Foss  
 4495 Margaret Street  
 St. Paul, MN 55110  
 651/429-6762  
[jer2911@comcast.net](mailto:jer2911@comcast.net)