

El Tintéro is Spanish for "the inkwell." Legend has it that Martin Luther threw an inkwell at Satan who tempted Luther while he was writing.

A MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

Briarwood Lutheran Retreat Center Hosts Weekend #94

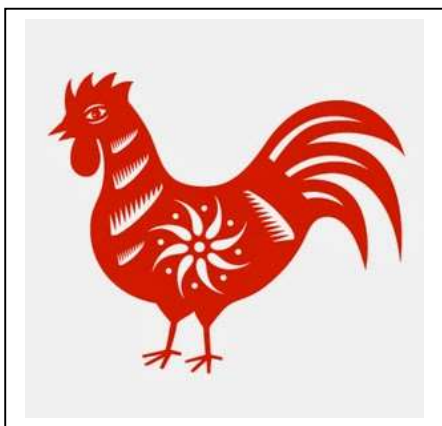
Sharon Bartells

Rector, Weekend #94

Several years ago, I took a pottery class. There were two important things I learned during the 6 week class. The first was that I needed to hold on tight to my day job because there was no future for me as a potter. But the second and much more important lesson I learned was what the potter and clay analogy really means. 'Yet you, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.' Isaiah 64:8. Our instructor started us with good quality clay – even so it was hard and resistant to my efforts to knead it. So I had to add water to it. I was reluctant to add too much for fear it would become mushy but it seemed to be thirsty for it and it absorbed the water as quickly as I added it. Finally I was able to shape a nice smooth ball from the lump I started with.

Left on its own, that ball of clay would have been perfectly content to stay a ball of clay. But in order for it to be useful, it needed to be shaped. I could have just tried to mold it with my own hands but the instructor had a better tool. So I threw it onto the potter's wheel and slowly started spinning it. It took a lot of tries to get the clay centered correctly (once it flew off and smacked the student next to me) but I finally learned to use my hands to pull and shape the clay into a bowl. But sometimes, I spun too fast or squeezed too hard and the whole thing just fell apart. But that didn't mean the clay was no good – only that it needed more work. So back to the kneading board I went, putting more muscle into it along with more water, and it was ready to be used again. Over and over went this process until I finally had a shape that was usable. Then I set it out to dry.

continued on page 2



GATHER AT THE RIVER...CENTERED IN CHRIST

Doug Guinn

Lay Director, Lutheran Via de Cristo of North Texas

As I write this I am at my wife Barb's home place, a farm in Northeast Iowa, having a wonderful visit with her mom. Last week at this time we were on the road traveling to the 2015 Via de Cristo National Lutheran Secretariat (NLS) Gathering at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. The theme of this year's Gathering was "Gather at the River...Centered in Christ". While there was business to be conducted, the heart of the Gathering was the worship, fellowship and learning with other Christians who have attended a Via de Cristo or other 3-Day Cursillo weekend.

Barb and I along with Carol Otterstad, our Secretariat's other delegate, experienced worship as we would at any Clausura or Ultreya gathering. We listened to talks from leaders of the NLS and dialogued in both large and small group settings to examine how we are living out our 4th Day as we learned from our Weekend. We learned from and challenged each other as to how we might live a more authentic Christian life. How do we make a friend, be a friend and introduce our friend to Christ; How are we studying and influencing our environments for Christ; How is Christ counting on us to be his hands, feet, eyes and heart tending to His sheep, and finally how are we counting on Christ to lead and guide us in fulfilling our role in following His Great Commission?

We learned from members of Secretariats from coast to coast, and the NLS leaders, new ideas and new ways to do things that can strengthen our Secretariat and 4th Day community to be more centered in Christ. I learned there are almost universal challenges, and that we have more in common than we have differences. We were offered assistance to help us address some of the most pressing issues in our Secretariat. This Gathering truly represented the Body of Christ, in worship, in prayer, in action. We have an advocate in this Body.

I am excited about the possibilities God has in store for our North Texas community. In the near future, we will be sharing opportunities we learned to strengthen your 4th Day. We also want you to share with us ways you have found that you are strengthened. In closing, please join me in the Prayer of Confession from our Saturday morning worship at the Gathering:

continued on page 3

continued from page 1

But I didn't leave it to dry out. I added a glaze and sent it to the kiln. Only after it withstood the heat of the firing, would the piece be strong enough to use.

What does this have to do with Weekend 94, you ask? Stay with me, I'm getting there. My first Via de Cristo experience was a Grand Ultreya that I attended with my husband, who had just gone through his weekend. I was a bit overwhelmed by the size and spirit of the event. There were so many people all with so much talent. Although everyone was loving and welcoming, I felt so unworthy to be there. They were beautiful vessels of God. What was I doing there? I attended the following weekend and it changed my life. I was amazed and uplifted by the incredible presence of God in his people through every aspect of it, but especially through the 4th day participation in Palanca, Wakeup and Clausura. So many people I didn't know came out just to show us God's love!

When I attended that first Ultreya, I was a smooth ball of clay. I had the living water of Christ in my heart and I was moldable. But I wasn't very useful. Years of fear had kept me from living my life for Christ in the fullest. Every time I'd been on the wheel, I'd fallen off or fell apart. But my Via de Cristo weekend provided the guidance and the tools to get me back on the wheel and keep me balanced. With the Via de Cristo method in place, spinning the wheel, God could take that lump of clay I gave him and mold it into something sturdy and useful. And it was a good thing for me that he did. It wasn't long after my weekend that I found myself and my family in the fire – literally several years of trial after trial. Had I not been fashioned into a stronger vessel by God on my weekend, I'm not sure I would have made it through those years. But God brought me out of that kiln stronger than ever.

In a few weeks, pilgrims will arrive at Briarwood for another Via de Cristo. We as the 4th day community will equip them with a set of tools to invite the Holy Spirit to shape and mold them into Christian leaders. We know that this time of renewal is just the beginning for them as it was for us. They will face trials of fire as the enemy tries to steal the peace they find in the love of Christ. It is our joy and responsibility to be the support they need on the weekend and as they return to their day to day lives. I ask you all to accept that call and join us at Briarwood for Serenade, for Wakeup and for Clausura. Please pray for the staff and the participants. Send Palanca in all its forms. Invite the cursillistas to small group and Ultreya. Make sure that they have the support they need to face the fires because they will be the ones who carry the blessing that is Via de Cristo into the future.

Ultreya!

-Sharon

Bloom Where You're Planted

Helen Mayo

Secretary, Lutheran Via de Cristo of North Texas

The summer season is coming to an end and we now look forward to the Fall and lower temperatures. I remember my mother would plant tulip and iris bulbs in the Fall. We often think of Spring as a time of new beginnings, but Fall-planted bulbs produce the first

continued on page 3



Make a Great Choice!

Make LVDCNT Your Thrivent Choice!

Thrivent Choice, the Thrivent Financial charitable giving program, allows eligible benefit members to participate in choosing where Thrivent distributes a portion of its charitable funds. Eligibility for Choice Dollars is based on a benefit member's involvement in Thrivent Financial, their level of product ownership (life insurance, health insurance, and annuities), and volunteer leadership.

Please make your choice Lutheran Via De Cristo of North Texas! To assign your Choice Dollars, go online and visit www.Thrivent.com or call 1-800-847-4836 and say 'Thrivent Choice.'

As your Choice Dollars recipient, this will help us continue our mission of providing Grace Weekends!

Aren't grace weekends great?

You know they are! Please consider making a contribution. Your gift of \$155.00 can sponsor a participant!

Palanca!

The cool thing about palanca is that it can take so many forms. Letters, notes, crafty things, books, food, voices for serenade, and your presence at Clausura. It ALL speaks to the participants who are experiencing it as a human expression of God's wonderful, amazing, free GRACE!

No matter what form flows from you, let it flow freely this coming weekend, August 13-16. The best place to bring items and food is to the 4th Day Room in Oak Grove. Serenade on Saturday will be in the Love Team Chapel in Oak Grove. Even though Daylight Savings Time makes a really early start to Sunday, Wake Up has such a huge impact. You won't want to miss it! Clausura on Sunday will be in the new Streng Leadership Center (the new headquarters bldg), and I know you will want to check that out, too!

One more thing. If you can come early to Clausura and/or stay late, your help to set up or take down would be real palanca to the teams who are working hard to get things picked up, set up, and taken down.

Thank you for your part in making the weekend a special gift for so many!!!

Ultreya! **Shelly Brennan**, Palanca Coordinator

Shelly Brennan

blooms of next year's season. The bulbs spend the winter making roots and come up early in the spring.

We all have different gifts. Sometimes we plant bulbs just by living our faith each day. We water them with the palanca of prayer – such as serving on love team or writing notes to staff and participants of our Via de Cristo weekends. We can offer the blessed fertilizer of food, or our presence at Wake-up and Closing on those same weekends. Sometimes we are the bulbs, called to bloom where we are planted, whether we are a rose, a daisy, or even a tulip.

As you continue to grow and bloom, consider your participation in the 4th day – attending the upcoming fall Grand Ultreya, meeting with your reunion group, supporting the upcoming November weekend. As we all continue to grow and bloom in Christ, remember – Ultreya!

*“Gracious God, we come before you in need of forgiveness and grace.
You call us to trust in you completely, but we do not.
We are timid and fearful as we follow your lead.
We justify our actions and words, though we know they are not what you require.
We struggle to understand the new life Christ offers, preferring old habits to risky change.
Forgive us, we pray.
Help us to be born again into the life of Christ, trusting that you have included us by grace in the family of faith.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.”*

+Blessings to you all, and Ultreya!

Pray For Our Weekend #94 Participants

Participant	Church	Sponsor
GARY CAVAGNARO	Grace Lutheran, Carrollton	Kimbal Markwardt
PAUL DOBBS	Calvary Lutheran, Richland Hills	Bob Thomas
SHARON DOBBS	Calvary Lutheran, Richland Hills	Debbie Thomas
SALLY KLOPPE	Christ The Servant Lutheran, Denton	Lee Lacy
LYNN SOWDERS	Hope Lutheran, Springtown	Laura Johnson & Marian Sowders
HOLLY TURNBOW	Faith Lutheran, Flower Mound	Kimberly Silva
DANIEL HAAS	Grace Lutheran, Carrollton	Vern Steinman
CHRISTINA TRESTER	Resurrection Lutheran, Plano	Cynthia Murphy
CINDY MAXWELL	Calvary Lutheran, Richland Hills	Cathy Rohloff

... And Our Weekend #94 Staff

Rector: Sharon Bartells
 Rector's CHA: Robin Mains
 Rector's CHA CHA: Louann Grams
 Observing Rector: Jerry Gray
 Spiritual Director: Pastor Janet Kraatz
 Spiritual Director: Pastor Suzanne Guinn
 Music CHA: Carol Van Buskirk
 Palanca CHA: Marilyn Hoppe
 Palanca CHA: Mark Brenden
 Food CHA: Sandra Brenden
 Food CHA: Dalene McWilliam
 Tech CHA: Paul Bartells
 Action Rollista: Berta McLemore
 Laity Rollista: Lee Lacy
 Environments Rollista: Kimbal Markwardt
 Study Rollista: Doris Forte
 Ideal Rollista: Don Holmes
 Leaders Rollista: Sandra Gass
 Christian Community Rollista: Steve Gilbertson
 Piety Rollista: Elaine Welty
 4th Day Rollista: Jon Krueger
 Table Leader: Ginger Metcalf

Save the Date! Via de Cristo #94 Happens August 13 – 16,

Each Weekend is another opportunity for your 4th Day light to shine. You can be a blessing in so many ways, and here is how:

Wed-Aug 12:

6:30pm – Setup. Palanca and Food drop-off

Thu-Aug 13:

6:45 – Pray for blessings as the Weekend begins

Sat-Aug 15:

12:40 – Arrive for Love Team Visitation

1:10 – Love Team Visitation

Sun-Aug16 (Participants 4th Day!)

6:00am – Arrive for Wake-Up

6:30am – Wake-Up

Too early? That's okay! Come later & help!

2:30pm – Setup for Clausura, or begin to take down the Rollo Room and the Living Room

But don't miss the real treat!

3:30pm – Clausura begins



How can we get more Pastors involved in Via de Cristo?

Pastor Janet Kraatz

Spiritual Director, Lutheran Via de Cristo of North Texas

Why won't the pastors come for a VdC weekend, and then serve as SD's?

This is a topic that has been on the collective mind of the Secretariat for a long, long time. As a pastor myself, I have found it difficult to answer these questions, and even more difficult to find colleagues willing to serve on our Weekends. This is not unique to NTLVdC. It was a topic of discussion at the National Gathering that I attended last summer.

We have begun to understand this more clearly. Most pastors are called by congregations, and understand their primary responsibilities to be serving their church, and doing things that they and the congregation members feel will glorify God and build up the congregation. To my way of thinking, and many as well in our NTNL Mission Area, one good thing to do is provide opportunities for members to learn about leadership in a congregation. I think the two best offerings for that in NTNL are Via de Cristo and the Parish Lay Mission Academy. Nevertheless, although I try to serve those two groups, it has been a struggle to balance that with my duties at my own church. I have done it because my congregation has been supportive of my activities outside Faith LC, Fort Worth. Not all pastors are so privileged or blessed.

However, if a congregation, through its members talking with the pastor and the congregation leaders, were to set Via de Cristo as a priority for their pastor, and provide support for the pastor to attend and serve, the pastor would be MUCH more likely to do so. Therefore, it is up to the Fourth Day, the Ultreyas

and other groups within each congregation to get the ball rolling.

Talk to your pastor and discover why they are unable to serve or attend; remember Via de Cristo is not for everyone, so respect your pastor's ideas and provide positive information if needed. Invite them to talk to another pastor involved in the movement for clear information about what the SD's role is. It will be the encouragement and support of church members that will "push" the pastor to consider Via de Cristo. The Holy Spirit must be the leader and guide, but you can be the sower of the seeds.

Ultreya!

-Pastor Janet

Christ's Hands in Action

David Van Buskirk

Logistics Coordinator, Lutheran Via de Cristo of North Texas

Welcome to the Via de Cristo 4th day community participants, staff and the community itself. My name is David Van Buskirk and I am part of the logistical weekend team and we can use your help. As you have found out, there's many things that need to happen in making these weekends successful.

Part of my job description and duties is to make sure we have enough supplies, food, including setup and take down. This also includes anything else to make the participants feel loved and well taken care of. If this is something you would like to help with and be a part of, we are looking for some logistical CHAs, that's right, **YOU**. Feel free to contact me at woodinator@att.net if you have any questions on how **YOU** can make a difference.

Remember what **CHA** means, **Christ's Hands in Action**.

God Bless,

David

Remember how you felt after your Via de Cristo weekend?

ULTREYA

Carol Otterstad

Post-Weekend (4th Day) Representative, Lutheran Via de Cristo of North Texas

Planning is in the works for the next Grand Ultreya! It is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2015, 5-8PM at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Dallas.

Our agenda will include a pot luck, group reunions, a business meeting and worship. Come ready to reunite with old friends, meet new ones, fellowship, small group, worship, listen to a report about the July National Lutheran Secretariat Gathering in Rock Island, IL and elect several new members to the Secretariat. Watch for more details in the coming weeks.

As your Post-Weekend/ 4th Day coordinator, I am looking for a few good women and men to be the main VdC point-of-contact (POC) person for their congregation/ Ultreya. If you are willing serve in this capacity please contact me by phone (469) 671-8077, email (carol.otterstad@gmail.com) or in person at the Grand Ultreya.

The idea is to provide more support to, and increase communications within our Lutheran Via de Cristo of North Texas community. The Secretariat would pass on to the POCs, ideas and actions they are considering that would help strengthen the ministries of our 4th Day members. In turn, the VdC POCs would share ideas from 4th Day members of their congregation/ Ultreya. Also VdC POCs would meet periodically to share ideas with each other.

I look forward to hearing from you!

+Blessings!!

-Carol

Go Tell it on the Mountain

Chris Gebhardt

Pre-Weekend Representative, Lutheran Via de Cristo of North Texas

As our new three day pilgrims prepare for their Via de Cristo weekend it is humbling to think about the long path that brought each of them to this exciting moment in their lives. It is also important to remember that they did not get here alone, and I am not just referring to their sponsor who will so caringly

abandon them at Briarwood on Thursday night. A lot happens between when someone first hears about Via de Cristo and when they finally attend a weekend.

Many of us can remember the first time we heard about Via de Cristo. It could have been a note we saw on the church billboard, or an announcement on Sunday morning. Maybe it was from a friend who recently attended their first weekend. They were super energetic and excited. Their eyes were a little too big and bright, and they probably hugged you for no obvious reason. Or maybe like me you just grew up with it, almost like a family right of passage (both of my parents attended weekend 16 when I was just 6 years old).

Regardless of how you first learned of Via de Cristo, you probably didn't run out and register for the next weekend right away. You likely had a lot of questions and maybe even a few reservations as well. And for most of you someone stepped in to ease your mind, and tell you what Via de Cristo was all about. But what if you had no idea who to ask or where to find out more?

That is where pre-weekend prep and community outreach finds our mission, and where I can use your help. Over the coming weeks I will be putting together a group to go visit with members at churches in our area who are interested in Via de Cristo. Many of them have only just begun to learn what we are all about, but don't know who can answer their questions. This is your opportunity to be that person with the eyes that are just a little too big and bright. Be the indiscriminate hugger. Or just share the awesome experience that you have had with others. If you are interested in helping with outreach please e-mail me at c.gebhardt24@yahoo.com. I would love to hear from anyone who would like to help in any way, big or small.

Ultreya!!

