

Grace V Life in Grace (Keep On Keeping On)

Situation and Objective

We have come to the final Grace talk of the weekend. This rollo, together with the other Sunday rollos, is directing the candidates to life back home. It seeks to deal with the unspoken (or perhaps spoken) question: “How can I keep alive and vibrant this joy and enthusiasm of living in Christ?”

This talk is to help the candidates for the “long haul” of the Christian walk. They have already begun this preparation through the “Environment” rollo. This sharing should be as practical as possible, but also as inspirational as possible too. A stronger emphasis is placed on the Piety section of the Green Card (Spiritual Aids) as a way of tying in disciplines that have already been practiced on the weekend itself. Study and Action have received healthy emphasis in other talks, but can be underscored here. Living boldly and positively with Christ and other Christians is a challenge. They will be learning today how this is possible.

Though it may be mentioned at other times during the day, this is an excellent opportunity to affirm a solid commitment to congregational life and active membership in the Body of Christ as a means of increasing one’s own faith and the faith of others. The local church is the primary avenue through which our faith is exercised – the not Via de Cristo.

This rollo should take about 35 – 40 minutes.

Life in Grace Outline

- I. A possible introduction
 - a. This will be the final Spiritual Director’s talk of the weekend – I promise. We have been taking a Grace walk with you these three days. We have seen that God is a God of Grace and loves us, no matter what. We have realized that this is not only a neat idea or philosophy, but that God personalizes, actualizes if you will, this grace for us. We have found that God makes this grace concrete and “incarnational” in and through physical and circumstantial means. And finally, we found that even though there are obstacles to grace in this world, even those can be used for our building and God’s glory (Romans 8:28).
 - b. This talk is called “**Life in Grace**”. Or as some like to call it, “How to keep on keeping on”. Someone has to ask the question and it might as well be me: “Is this Via de Cristo a sort of temporary insanity? Have the chas (angels, servants) been spiking our coffee? Will we wake up

sober tomorrow morning? And if it has been real here, what's the real world out there going to do with people like us?

- c. Many of us have felt the Holy Spirit tugging on us deeply this weekend. The Word of God, the wonderful Communion services, the prayers of people all over the world, love everywhere we turn – all of this and more has made this an intense experience. So now what? Is it all down hill from here?
 - d. Some time earlier, our Rector shared that everything you need, Via de Cristo has made provision. I have good news. You are going to be given some “tools” of faith today, to help you maintain your life in grace tomorrow, and every day thereafter. In fact, you have been using many of these tools already this weekend. Let me explain.
- II. The “Green Card” (these should have been distributed before the talk)
- a. This is a guide for staying alive in your faith
 - b. Not surprisingly, the “rhythm” of the Christian life revolves around three elements: Piety, Study, and Action
 - c. There is a list of Spiritual “aids” to deepen our walk with Christ – Our Piety
 - i. Worship and communion
 - 1. Do not attend church! Go to worship!
 - 2. Receive the Lord's Supper as often as you can
 - ii. Morning Offering and Evening Thanks
 - 1. Begin the day by offering it to God
 - a. We have been doing this each day
 - b. Invite the Lord to be present in your relationships and situations
 - 2. End the day with a short word of thanks
 - iii. Devotions, Meditation, and Prayer
 - 1. There is nothing like a warm and personal time with God each day
 - 2. Read a bit of Scripture and/or from a devotional book
 - 3. Form prayers are okay, but also be intuitive. Pray what occupies your mind and heart. Remember, this is your best friend you are talking to.
 - iv. Examination of Conscience
 - 1. We have been doing this too
 - 2. Do this periodically. It does not have to be laborious

3. This often leads to action, like healing a relationship
- v. Altar and Chapel Visit
 1. Spend a few moments kneeling at the altar of your church, alone or with a friend
- vi. Family Prayer
 1. If this has not been a practice in your home, introduce it gradually
 2. Teenagers have been known to freak out at the sudden introduction of this practice
 3. The family that prays together, does tend to stay together
- vii. Blessing before meals
- viii. Spiritual Direction
 1. Make an appointment to sit down with your pastor once or twice a year to assess your growth
 2. He/She will be honored to share this time. That's why we're there
- ix. As a pastor, I must say that these are all possible aids to your walk with Christ. Just doing them like a check list will not guarantee a deeper relationship. Any and all of them, however, can be means through which you and your Lord can express your love for one another. Believe it or not, if you did all of them, it probably wouldn't add more than 30-45 minutes to your day. What an investment!
- d. Our Study life – (refer to the Study rollo)
 - i. Much has been shared already this weekend about the need to deepen our faith through some concentrated study of Scriptures. This can be done by utilizing: Bible courses, Adult education classes, and Bible commentaries
 - ii. There are numerous Christian periodicals, inspirational books, and books specifically dealing with aspects of the faith or theology
 - iii. Ask your pastor for a good approach to your continued study in the faith
- e. Making a Difference with our lives – (from the Action rollo)
 - i. God has places for ministry for each of us. They may be day-to-day routines of our lives, or in special areas of gifts, interest, or concern.

- ii. It is absolutely necessary that we find our ministries and pursue them

- 1. Note Genesis 11:28, Matthew 25, Romans 12

III. Life in the “Body” – The Church

- a. The ***primary*** faith community in your life – NOT Via de Cristo
- b. Be a positive blessing in your congregation’s growth in faith and witness
- c. Pray, pray, pray for your church, your pastor, your fellow church members
- d. Make an appointment to meet with your pastor
 - i. Share the joy of the weekend
 - ii. Ask how to be most supportive of him/her and of the life of the church
- e. Utilize your pastor as a “Spiritual Director” in your life
- f. No secrets! Feel free to share about the substance and schedule of the weekend. You don’t have to share all of the surprises.
- g. No cliques! Treat all brothers and sisters in Christ in your congregation the same. Don’t exchange expressions of affection (hugs) that you aren’t willing to share with anyone. No one is to feel different because they haven’t attended a weekend. Christ is the great equalizer. Keep a servant heart.

IV. A possible Conclusion

- a. There you have it, a prescription of a balanced Christian life. Meeting in small groups regularly will deepen your Piety, Study, and Action. You will be encouraged in that area later today. A good rule of thumb for exercising your faith on a weekly basis (apart from your personal devotional life...
- b. Five for Faith
 - i. One hour for worship
 - ii. One hour for large group Bible study
 - iii. One hour for small group sharing
 - iv. Two hours devoted to specific ministry action
- c. Dear friends, the best is yet to be! The experience of thousands before you testify that the weekend is only the beginning. You will grow and your faith will deepen. Life can be lived in Grace – the Grace of God in Jesus Christ

d. God loves you and so do I!