

Event Rollo Outlines

The following commentary for each of the Rollos is to assist the speakers in creating their own personal talk. The speakers are strongly encouraged to make the talk their own based on personal experiences. As this material provides direction and inspiration, please add your authenticity by drawing upon personal individual experience. If one simply reads the talk as presented here, your hearers will be deprived of the Christ in you. Remember though, the more important part of the weekend will occur during the table discussions. Your talk is intended to spark ideas which will drive the table's conversation.

1. PERSPECTIVE

Purpose

Review the Cursillo history with emphasis on the charism given to Eduardo Bonin in response to the Spanish church's prayers. Explain the purpose and method of Cursillo, and how it broke out into the entire Church. Emphasize the need for this gift in today's environments.

Introduction

Our conversation begins with a nation in turmoil. The Spanish Civil War took place from 1936 to 1939 and has frequently been called the "dress rehearsal" for World War II. Those loyal to the legally elected leftist Republic, in alliance with the Anarchists and Communists, fought against a revolt sponsored by the Nationalists, an alliance of Falangists, Monarchists, Carlists, and Catholics. The Nationalists were led by a military clique among whom General Francisco Franco soon took the key role. Due to the international political climate, the war had many facets. Differing views saw it with differing emphasis, as a class struggle; a war of religion; a struggle between dictatorship and republican democracy; a contest sanctioning either revolution or counter-revolution, and ultimately a battle between fascism and communism. The Nationalists did win the war and ruled Spain until Franco's death in 1975. During the war many atrocities were committed by both sides. There were thousands of casualties. Churches, monasteries and convents were burned and on occasion their residents executed.

While Spain was considered a Catholic country, about two-thirds of Spaniards were not *practicing* Catholics; churches were used for baptisms, weddings and funerals, but they never confessed or went to mass. One hundred years earlier the church had been disentailed of its lands. But, having received compensation in cash, by 1912 it was estimated that a third of the country's capital was controlled by religious orders. The Vatican did support the Nationalist rebellion, but many common people were, at best indifferent, and more likely antagonistic to the church. In this environment, Eduardo Bonnin Aguilo of Mallorca Spain, became active in Catholic Action, and joined his countrymen in praying for wisdom. From 1936 to 1945 he served in the military and grieved over the animosity and indifference of his countrymen.

I. History

- In 1922 Catholic Action was formed by Pope Pius XI in response to the anti-clerical regimes in many countries. He made great efforts to organize the laity, first in Italy and then throughout the whole church. Pius XII, his successor, acknowledging the flood of people moving away from Christianity, challenged leaders to make every effort to bring people back to the faith. This call motivated Eduardo Bonnin to become a leader in Catholic Action. In Spain, Catholic Action took the form of a pilgrimage to St James of Compostela, and Eduardo joined with many others to prepare leaders for the event.

- Weeklong courses were offered to train leaders for the pilgrimage. He saw that the message was good, but those who presented the message were boring; it all had to be enlivened. They had to prepare the participants not just for the Pilgrimage to Santiago but for life.
- Eduardo was inspired to take the living gospel of Jesus Christ into the “barracks”. He drew upon his education, his experience with Catholic Action, extensive reading, devote faith, love for the church, and love for people. He prayed for a catalyst, a leavening agent for ‘faraway’ people and their environments. He wanted to revitalize, in a deep way, those who were already close. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit Eduardo devised an intensive 3-day experiment to ignite authentic Christianity.
- His short course was offered for the first time in August 1944 and repeated 5 times in the five years following.
- The actual Catholic Action pilgrimage to Compostela took place in August 1948. It is said that 100,000 Spaniards participated, we understand that more than 600 joined from Mallorca.
- In January 1949 Bishop Juan Hervas added support from the Mallorcan diocese to Eduardo’s Cursillo and, with that support and further clarification of the method, the weekends occurred more frequently. It was then that the weekends began to be numbered.
- In 1955 Bishop Juan Hervas was moved to Ciudad Real (a possibly punishment for his support of Cursillo) but introduced it there as well. The new Mallorcan Bishop quenched Cursillo activity for a few years but it exploded elsewhere. Today, the movement has been recognized and endorsed in many dioceses around the world.
- Two Spanish airmen training near Waco, Texas found a Franciscan priest who had participated back on Mallorca. They held the first American weekend in 1957. It spread rapidly across the country.
- People of protestant faiths, leaders in their environments, were invited to weekends, and they in turn introduced it to their own denominations.
- Unknown to one another, in 1972 Lutheran weekends were held in Miami Florida and Atlantic Iowa. In 1976 they put on a weekend together in Illinois. In 1981, at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church in Atlanta, Ga, the National Lutheran Secretariat was formed from the many communities growing around the country. Each protestant denomination has a similar history with many of their communities choosing to maintain an ecumenical stance.
- Because of the movement’s rapid spread there were initially adaptations and then mutations. To protect the original charism, attempts were made to control and govern its spread by licensing the name Cursillo®. It didn’t work! It actually forced a burst of different names for a similar effort.
- Education, interaction, communication and prayer appear to be the best method to deal with the many mutations. In 2012 leaders from the largest 4th Day movements met with Victor Lugo, then head of the Catholic Cursillo® of the United States, to review together the original charism.
- Eduardo Bonnin expresses the original charism in this way. “The objective of the Cursillo® Movement consists in facilitating people to encounter Christ, and to let this encounter grow, developing it through living in Grace in a conscious, deep, and contagious way. Cursillo is the best news, that God loves us, shared by the most human of all means, friendship, directed towards the best thing that each person possesses, himself or herself.”

II. Contemporary America

- Secular humanism along with postmodern philosophy has come to dominate much of contemporary American thinking. As the church in 1940 faced the challenge of communist atheism on the one hand and fascist dictators on the other; the church today faces agnosticism, syncretism, secular humanism, and divisive individualism.
- 4th Day Living seeks to address real human needs, physical and spiritual, and bring the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to individuals in every environment in America and the world.
- The effort of bringing the best news (God loves you), through the best means (friendship) to the heart of every individual is an effort worthy of my commitment and my sacrifice.

2. GRACE REKINDLED

Purpose

A clergy talk designed to rekindle in us a theologically sound understanding of Grace in our personal and professional lives. We reflect particularly on the instruction presented during the Grace in Action Rollo as well as Life in Grace Rollo from the Weekend. We remember the spiritual disciplines that make the ideal of living the rest of our lives in Grace feasible. This talk is to be presented by clergy, so a greater leeway is encouraged as long as the stated purpose is achieved.

Introduction

Grace: the unmerited favor of God toward man. Grace: **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**. Grace is an essential part of God's character. Grace is closely related to God's benevolence, love, and mercy. Grace can be defined as God's favor toward the unworthy and undeserving. In His grace, God is willing to forgive us and abundantly bless us. The kingdom of God, God's active rule of grace in and among his people, is "at hand" in Jesus the Messiah (Matt 3:2).

To appreciate all that grace is, we need to consider who we are without Christ and who we become with Christ. We were born in sin (Psalm 51:5), and we were guilty of breaking God's holy laws (Romans 3:9–20, 23; 1 John 1:8–10). We were enemies of God (Romans 5:6, 10; 8:7; Colossians 1:21), deserving of death (Romans 6:23). We were unrighteous (Romans 3:10) and without means of 'justifying' ourselves (Romans 3:20). Spiritually, we were poverty stricken, blind, unclean, and, speaking spiritually, dead. Our souls were in peril of everlasting punishment.

But then came grace. Grace is what saves us (Ephesians 2:8). Grace is the essence of the gospel (Acts 20:24). Grace gives us victory over sin (James 4:6). Grace gives us "eternal encouragement and good hope" (2 Thessalonians 2:16). Paul repeatedly identified grace as the basis of his calling as an apostle (Romans 15:15; 1 Corinthians 3:10; Ephesians 3:2, 7). Jesus Christ is the embodiment of grace, coupled with truth (John 1:14).

I. The Bible repeatedly calls grace a "gift" (e.g. Ephesians 4:7)

This is an important analogy because it teaches us some key things about grace:

First, anyone who has ever received a gift understands that a gift is much different from a loan, which requires repayment or return by the recipient. The fact that grace is a gift means that *nothing is owed in return*.

Second, there is no cost to the person who receives a gift. A gift is *free to the recipient*, although it is not free to the giver, who bears the expense. The gift of salvation costs us sinners nothing. But the price of such an extravagant gift came at a great cost for our Lord Jesus, who died in our place.

Third, once a gift has been given, ownership of the gift has transferred, and it is now *ours to keep*. There is a permanence in a gift that does not exist with loans or advances. When a gift changes hands, the giver permanently relinquishes all rights to renege or take back the gift in future. God's grace is ours forever.

Fourth, in the giving of a gift, the giver voluntarily forfeits something he owns, willingly losing what belongs to him so that the recipient will profit from it. The giver becomes poorer so the recipient can become richer. This *generous and voluntary exchange* from the giver to the recipient is expressed in 2 Corinthians 8:9: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

Finally, the Bible teaches that grace is completely *unmerited*. The gift and the act of giving have nothing at all to do with our merit or innate quality (Romans 4:4; 11:5–6; 2 Timothy 1:9–10). The Bible makes it perfectly clear that we don't deserve God's loving salvation. Romans 5:8–10: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. . . While we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son."

II. God is gracious to us for the rest of our lives, working within and upon us.

Luther reminds us that in this life we continue as both saints, fully justified, and true sinners. The Bible encourages us with the many additional benefits that Christ has secured for each of us:

- Grace fully justifies us before a holy God (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:6; Titus 3:7).
- Grace provides us access to God to communicate and fellowship with Him (Ephesians 1:6; Hebrews 4:16).
- Grace wins for us a new relationship of intimacy with God (John 3:16 Exodus 33:17).
- Grace disciplines and trains us to live in a way that honors God (Titus 2:11–14; 2 Corinthians 8:7).
- Grace grants us immeasurable spiritual riches (Proverbs 10:22; Ephesians 2:7).
- Grace helps us in our every need (Hebrews 4:16)
- Grace is the reason behind our every deliverance (Psalm 44:3–8; Hebrews 4:16).
- Grace preserves us and comforts, encourages, and strengthens us (2 Corinthians 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17; 2 Timothy 2:1).

III. Grace is actively and continually working in the lives of God's people.

- Paul credited the success of his ministry not to his own substantial labors but to "the grace of God that was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10).
- Grace is the ongoing, benevolent act of God working in us, without which we can do nothing (John 15:5).
- Grace is greater than our sin (Romans 5:20), more abundant than we expect (1 Timothy 1:14), and too wonderful for words (2 Corinthians 9:15).
- The abundance flows as we abide in Christ. (John 15:5a)
- We are empowered by grace to accomplish great works (John 14:12)

We are saved by grace through faith and this is not our own doing! It is the gift of God and not a result of works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

3. FRIENDSHIP

Purpose

A time of rekindling the power within apostolic action: Make a friend. Be a friend. Live your friendship in Christ. The emphasis here is on person to person, face to face contact. 4th Day Living requires authentic friendships and personal encounters. Clarify our tendency to seek easy ways out – newsletters, web pages, email, social media & blogs; certainly, any of these may be useful but IT MUST ALWAYS BE PERSON TO PERSON first, last, and always.

Introduction

In John Chapter 15 we hear Jesus say:

¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another." (John 15:15-17 ESV).

When Jesus is teaching a new understanding of discipleship, he uses a term we translate simply as friend. But do we grasp all that Jesus wants us to understand? When we think about it, we know it is impossible to place a value on a good friend. They bring what money can't possibly buy. Friends hold our attention, pique our curiosity, and fuel our conversations. When Jesus calls us friends, he speaks volumes about his intentions for us and for His Church. Jesus has much more in mind than a ritualistic religious organization. It is to be no less than a loving family.

I. Friendship is love in its richest form.

Friendship is love in its richest form. Much more than erotic attraction, it embodies something deeper. In I Samuel we learn of the friendship between David and Johnathon, a friendship that saved David's life on more than one occasion. In Proverbs 18:24 we hear: "A man of too many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Obviously, we want authenticity rather than popularity. And friendship isn't always nice Proverbs 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." Authentic friends are loving enough to be honest with you. It may not feel good at the time but, the authenticity allows for learning, trust, and growth. This adds depth to 1 Peter 4:8 "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."

When asked what people appreciate about friendship they make comments like: we talk, we help each other, we laugh, we do stuff together, we invest time in each other, we're open, we accept each other as we are, we build each other up, we trust each other, we give and take advice, we hold one another accountable, we forgive, we keep confidences we commit to each other, and many more.

(Share about a friendship of yours)

II. Make a friend. Be a friend. Live your friendship in Christ!

In Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 we read "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift-up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up." Practical advice, but we know that friendship involves so much more. Proverbs 17:17 states "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

Jesus said in John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Then He adds in John 15:12-14 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. **And** you have already heard “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I *command* you, so that you will love one another.”

On your 3 Day Weekend you heard the formula: Make a friend. Be a friend. Bring your friend to Christ.” Perhaps now, after reflecting on these words of Jesus, you have a deeper appreciation for this formula. Our 3 Day Weekend teaches this method for the evangelization of environments. You study the environment; you find the leader or leaders. You, with the Holy Spirit’s direction, make a friend. You prove your friendship by being a true friend. You listen, seeking places of connection. You share of yourself, which naturally includes your deep friendship with Christ. As the Spirit gives lead, you invite your friend into the relationship with Jesus, and encourage them in their personal discoveries. You live your friendship in Christ.

(Share a story of friendship lived in Christ)

III. 4th Day friendship is personal

There are many forms of evangelization and we applaud them all. We 4th Day people love Jesus and we appreciate whatever method Jesus uses to call people to Himself. We have used other methods as well; but we know that we have been called to *live* friendship.

America, in the 17th and 18th century, saw two great awakenings of revivalist fervor. The Methodist Church earned the moniker “Methodist” from the “method” that was devised for bringing people to Christ. In the 20th century there was the powerful work by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and so many other evangelists. There were other parachurch organizations for youth, like Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Young Life, and Campus Crusade for Christ. These occurred in addition to millions of other faithful Christians living their love for Jesus within our churches.

Our society has seen an increasing sophistication in evangelism techniques. Churches and evangelists have used every means their imaginations conceive: television, computer, blogging, Facebook, YouTube, the list is endless. Many non-denominational congregations appear to be growing, my fear is, they are just picking up the faithful leaving our mainline churches. The “church growth” ideas have had an impact in many communities. Once again, we applaud whatever method Jesus uses to call people to Himself.

Our 4th Day movement is unique in two significant ways. First, we are not pulling people to come join our group! We are teaching a method, so Christians can be more effective right where they live. 4th Day people remain faithful to their own Christian traditions; become a blessing to their own pastors and churches. Second, and even more importantly, while we proclaim with every Christian, the best news, “that God loves us.” We use “the best means, friendship.” We do one on one, face to face, demonstrations of the gospel. When we make a friend, we allow the Spirit of God to love a person through us.

(Share some of your experiences with friendship)

The Jesus in me nourishes you, the Jesus in you nourishes me. Just as in the turmoil of Spain, God again reveals a charism that was effective at the time of Jesus, effective in the Dark Ages, effective in Reformation times, effective during the Enlightenment, and yes, effective today. Within the 4th Day Community we must know and practice the power of friendship.

4. OBSTACLES

Purpose

A Discussion of the many things that hinder and depress our 4th Day living; how many things call for our attention and divert us from obeying the Jesus directive “you shall be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8).

Introduction

In Martin Luther’s Large Catechism (I, 100) he writes this:

Let me tell you this. Even though you know the Word perfectly and have already mastered everything, you are daily under the dominion of the devil, and he does not rest day or night in seeking to take you unawares and to kindle in your heart unbelief and wicked thoughts against all the commandments. Therefore, you must constantly keep God’s Word in your heart, on your lips, and in your ears. For where the heart stands idle and the Word is not heard, the devil breaks in and does his damage before we realize it.

On the other hand, when we seriously ponder the Word, hear it, and put it to use, such is its power that it never departs without fruit. It always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devotion, and it constantly creates clean hearts and minds. For this Word is not idle or dead, but effective and living. Even if no other benefit or need drove us to the Word, yet everyone should be motivated by the realization that through the Word the devil is cast out and put to flight.

Can you remember on your Weekend you heard the line “The world has turned its back on Christ”? It comes in the Laity Rollo and the point being made is that evil is everywhere. Because this is true, everyone in the church is needed. We are needed to resist the devil. We are needed exactly where God has placed us. We are needed to share the gospel.

I. Need for vision

The idea that sin is out there is no surprise to any of us. However, the continuing power it manifests can be baffling: the gun violence; the many addictions – drugs, alcohol, sex, gaming, social media, our phones; the business and political corruption. (Share some things from this week’s news)

The Holy Spirit can heal our vision so that we might see clearly the causes of this evil. We can be granted the clarity of sight to see the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh at work. The methods of evil vary from country to country, region to region and even person to person.

Have you ever found yourself asking “which religion is true?” Have you heard “all roads lead to heaven?” This pluralism dove tails with a new tolerance mentality. Please don’t hear me advocating intolerance but, as said last night, secular humanism moving to postmodern philosophy has come to dominate contemporary thinking. The thoughts and wants of people have displaced Truth. “For me to have my truth, I should let you have yours!” People often pick and choose from multiple religions to form a “faith” that feels good to them, but one which does not align with Biblical truth.

In modernism people believed that mankind could solve its own problems. This form of humanism prompted thinkers to proclaim the absence of any god. This ‘modern’ idealism failed miserably in so many places, think Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot, and others. Because of the abysmal failures, thinkers have introduced postmodernism. In postmodern thought reality becomes a self-construct and truth is relative to the observer. One must be skeptical of all in authority (especially those in government) – they are just out for themselves! There is little if anything trustworthy.

All of today’s thinking has been tainted by postmodernism, even in our churches. Only by grace, can God give us healing and teach us our calling in this battle. Evil is real, do we cower in its presence? Do we capitulate? Are we forced to cave?

II. What does our cleared vision show us?

It is true, for many of us, evil comes at us like the unstoppable walls of some super-compact, but there is a solution and it has nothing to do with us. Remember St. Paul's plaintive cry in Roman's 7: "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Then comes the otherworldly solution, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

The Bible has been called the history of God's interaction with man. Beginning in Genesis we read of God's gracious giving and mankind's failure. The Bible tells humanity about the Truth which the world cannot give. Most importantly it is God's own Son who makes Life possible. Jesus told Thomas, "I am the way and the truth, and the life!" (John 14:6) The pressure today for unbiblical ethics, whether in ignorance or out and out rebellion against the Bible's teaching can feel irresistible.

(Share some of your personal struggle(s) to enable hearers to identify with you. Share only what you are comfortable sharing; please know the focus is to be on the Savior not the sin.)

III. The Kingdom of God is the reality above all realities.

St Augustine said, "You inspire us, O Lord, to delight in praising you, because you made us for yourself; our hearts are restless until they rest in you." For so many, life has been restlessness, rooted in movement away from the Lord. But the Lord will not let them go. When we deny His very existence, the Lord calls us back to Himself. Pursuit of material wealth, accumulating the goods of this world, all these things are attempts to find rest apart from Him. But the Lord will not let us find ultimate rest and deep inner peace, unless it is grounded in Him.

When we move away from Him and attempt, like the prophet Jonah to flee, He is still there waiting for us. When we sin and rebel against Him, seeking our own interests, we can't get away; he envelopes us with His love, calls us to repentance, and melts away our sin and sinfulness. Who is this that won't let us go; who pursues, captures, and overwhelms us with His love and forgiveness? He is the Lord of the universe, who brought all things into existence by His creative Word; He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the God who rescued the Israelites from the enslavement of the Egyptians. He is the God who became man in Jesus the Lord; He is the God who came upon the Apostles on Pentecost and raised up the Church. He is the Trinitarian God of awesome and overwhelming might, who still tenderly and gently loves each of us unconditionally. He loves us with the protective love of a Father and a Brother, and the sheltering love of a mother and a sister yet magnified by an infinite degree. He has stamped us and marked us as his own through Baptism. When overwhelmed by the source of all Love, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, our response is to simply bow down in humble adoration, surrender to Him, to give our all to Him, to serve Him with "all my heart, all my mind, and all my strength."

You see there are no obstacles that Jesus has not overcome. As Luther reminded us at the beginning of this talk, we must deal with the obstacles by immersing ourselves in the Word of God. We can then live this reality in friendship, obeying the Jesus directive "you shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

5 REPENTANCE

Purpose

A recognition that we personally are responsible for our part in failure (however failure is defined). Offer a call to repent of the pride that holds us to perfectionism, the jealousy we feel of another's "successes", our tendency to be judges of other people. Review Romans 14:4 clarifying how it applies to the church. Finally, a reminder of how we have forgotten our "first love!" It may be best if this talk is given by clergy.

Introduction

"Repent," urged Peter, "and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). "Repent" was the first command issued on the day the church was "born," the first word used to answer the all-important question, "what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Jesus promised that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

A correct understanding of repentance is fundamental to our 4th Day living. We must know what repentance means. We should have a solid understanding of how repentance relates to Godly sorrow, divine grace, and empowering faith.

I. What is repentance?

Repentance is the first step when the grace of God heals the relationship between God and humankind. Repentance involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God. Sometimes called a Godly sorrow, it is a realization that we have betrayed our Creator and rebelled against God's will. The word repent is most simply expressed as a turning, or "have a change of mind." This change of mind is a change of attitude and perspective and stimulates a change in behavior. It is turning from the way of life that is defined by man and turning to the way of life within God's will. Repentance implies a surrender of one's life—one's whole being, both mind and body—to God's will as expressed in His Word.

II. Understand that repentance is a gift of grace.

God commands repentance; yet, repentance is a gift of God. Jesus promised that, after His departure, the Holy Spirit would come and "convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:8–11).

God uses the circumstances of day-to-day life to bestow upon us the gift of repentance. The gift may come through the positive Christian example of a neighbor, or from reading a booklet on an intriguing biblical topic, or from a chain of events spanning many weeks or months, or even years. Shocking events in the news may be the catalyst that enables a person to receive God's gift of repentance. On the positive side, events such as people coming together to help relieve the suffering of others, may have the awakening effect through which God can bestow the gift of repentance. God can and does use the events of life—ordinary and extraordinary—to awaken people to their need of repentance.

(Share a personal story of repentance)

A key to true repentance is confession. Confession means being completely honest with oneself—and with God. It means admitting—privately, prayerfully—one's true motives, and resolving to never pretend that those motives are other than what they are.

Remember how King David suppressed his guilt after committing adultery with Bathsheba and sending her husband to a sure death on the front lines of combat. Once he was forced to face what he had done, he confessed his sin, repented deeply, and was loved by God.

III. Our repentance leads us be reconciled with others

Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:24-25 “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” In James 2, James reminds us that a “love of neighbor” that would do nothing more than tell his cold, hungry, and homeless brother or sister to “depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” is not love at all. Any “faith” that motivates a person to do nothing but say “I believe” is not the faith that heals! True faith—the kind that heals—is a faith that produces positive behavioral changes. Faith is a trusting conviction that motivates a person to repent—change his mind and his behavior—and bring his life into harmony with the will of God.

Healthy repentance opens us to others. As one translation of Jesus’ words puts it in Matthew 7:1-2 “Don’t criticize people... For you will be judged by the way you criticize others, and the measure you give will be the measure you receive.” Paul in Romans 14:4 says ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.”

When you are truly living in repentant friendship you will help your friend know how much you love them. True, it is often difficult to separate the person who is loved from the person’s behavior. But we must remember, it is our love that will impact another’s behavior. Technically, it will be the love of Christ in us that impacts the other’s behavior. A commitment to a lifestyle of repentance will assist you in loving the other without being tempted yourself. Galatians 6:1-2 instructs us “Even if a man should be detected in some sin, my brothers, the spiritual ones among you should quietly set him back on the right path, not with any feeling of superiority but being yourselves on guard against temptation. Carry each other’s burdens and so live out the law of Christ.”

As repentant people we come to a recognition that we personally are responsible for our part in any failure (however failure is defined). We are called to repent of the pride that holds us to perfectionism, the jealousy we feel of another’s “successes”, our tendency to be judges of others. We are all sinners and Jesus is the only remedy!

(Share a story relating healed relationships through confession)

IV. Repentance becomes a lifestyle.

Sin ravages our relationships with God and fellow human beings. Repentance is the remedy. Repentance becomes an ongoing attitude and lifestyle. Repentance as a way of life is growth—the continuous chain of changes leading to maturity. Repentance is a God-centered state of mind influencing every aspect of one’s life. It is a willingness to look first at yourself and only second at what may be wrong with another. Christian growth comes through paying attention to the “nudging” of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit always directs you along the path established by God’s law. We grow dull by neglecting the Spirit’s convicting presence. We must constantly be aware of Who our first Love truly is! We seek forgiveness from our True Love and open to His healing presence.

6. We Can Do This

Purpose

A clear look at all the features of 4th Day living including discussion of how they connect and interact. The value of the Pilgrims Guide, all the disciplines of the “service sheet” (your personal piety, study, and especially Apostolic Action -- both personal and group), Reunion Group, Ultreya, and Spiritual Direction, Pre and Post Weekend work, a reminder here that your 4th Day community is not your Church.

Introduction

So, let’s talk about this thing we call 4th Day Living! What is it? 4th Day Living is a matter of you choosing to follow a lifestyle of simple disciplines. These disciplines were given to Jesus disciples and have been practiced to varying degrees by sincere Christians since.

As you read through your Bible, you will see these disciplines being taught and practiced. Reflect for a moment on the “Shema” from Deuteronomy 6: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” In Mark 12:28-34 we read of how Jesus uses part of this passage in answer to the scribe’s question about the greatest commandment and then he added “and the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself.”. The scribe agreed and Jesus assured him “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.”

I. With inspiration from the Holy Spirit, 4th Day people find a life of discipline transformative. We grow as we practice the 4th Day disciplines. We choose to practice them in response to God’s call, and because we like the results.

We will speak first of disciplined “friendship.” When we live friendship, we are incorporating all that the Bible teaches about loving God and loving neighbor. As we shared last night, this comes as a gift to us as we live a repentant lifestyle. Jesus gives us friendship with God and empowers us to live friendship with others. By grace, with the Holy Spirit we can make friends, we can truly be friends, and we can live out our friendship together with Jesus’ help. Holy Spirit power is in friendship!

II. Spiritual Disciplines and Spiritual Direction

The exercise of spiritual disciplines establishes rhythm to our daily lives. It leads us to piety, study and apostolic action. It assists us in seeing the holiness in ordinary actions. Through an authentic daily Christian life, we come to know God not as the great fixer, but as the great Lover who will faithfully walk with us on life’s challenging journey. The author of Hebrews writes “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (12:11) While you might not find it painful, many find it difficult. Creating new habits in never easy.

When trying to live spiritual disciplines it is wise to have a spiritual director. A Spiritual Director is a person mature in spiritual wisdom and experience who helps you to listen to God and assists you in seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus. Spiritual direction is focused on growth through open and honest conversation. Your goal is to know Jesus Christ as part of all life, to listen to Christ in prayer and to act on His Word. The true Spiritual Director is always the Holy Spirit, and the human director serves as an experienced discernor, interpreter, encourager and companion. Through spiritual direction, we may

receive clarification of God's personal call to us and how we live ministry. A good spiritual director rarely "directs." They listen and feed back to the "directee" so the "directee" can hear through them what God is saying. How often do you find when you are "unpacking" ideas with someone, an answer comes.

Finding a competent spiritual director may be key in your discovering God's will for you. (Side note: don't be afraid to pay for it, Scripture reminds us that every worker is worthy of his hire. Luke 10:7, I Timothy 5:18)

There is an appropriate analogy between physical growth and spiritual growth. In each, a balanced diet is necessary. In each, there needs to be a willingness to ingest and digest nourishment so it can do its work. Spiritual food, represented in our acts of discipline, should be entered into wholeheartedly. Like all growth, spiritual growth is a process of unfolding. Christianity is a ministry of revelation, from God, in God's time, and at God's direction.

III. Group Reunion

You will remember hearing in the Christian Community in Action Rollo that an isolated Christian is a paralyzed Christian -- that just as embers quickly burn out when separated from a fire, we will also lose our glow if we do not regularly stoke the flames of our hearts. God created us for relationships; isolation, or even separation can be deadly to our spirits.

On page 35 of the Pilgrims guide we read "The reunion group is a friendship elevated to the highest level -- that of being a permanent actual grace." Reunion comes from the Spanish word for meeting. At your tables on the weekend, you formed a small community where you supported and encouraged each other. Just as God desires us to be in relationship with Him, He also wants us to be in ongoing relationships with one another. Group reunion is a place where committed Christians continue to grow together in Christ. They encourage one another along their own unique journeys. All this so that we might influence our respective environments for Christ.

We demonstrated at our 3 Day weekend tables that we don't have to all look or act alike to become part of a true community. Trust was built with confidentiality, patience, charity and encouragement. Reunion groups are inclusive and non-judgmental. In humility, we value another's gifts and learn to appreciate our own limitations.

These are the primary disciplines of the reunion method:

- Reunion groups meet weekly at a mutually convenient time and location.
- This meeting is a *primary* commitment for its members.
- The format of the service card is used including the Holy Spirit Prayer.
- Have group sharing which touches on piety, close moments to Christ, and study
- Discuss your plans for Apostolic Action so we can build friendships and bring others closer to Christ
- Members pray daily for one another.

It isn't necessary for someone to make a three-day weekend in order to participate in a group reunion.

Anyone who is willing to use the ideals of friendship and accountability as means to being better witnesses for Christ should be welcome. A group may go on for years or may need to change after a shorter time. Like life, situations change; change is a part of this world. Those who have invested

themselves in this discipline will tell you of the rewards in increasing faith, hope, love and courage.

There are two types of reunion groups. The first is our permanent reunion group which meets regularly, most often, weekly. Its membership changes little and only by necessity. The second is referred to as a floating reunion and it occurs when 4th Day people come together. The membership of the group is for the moment and is often made up of new people and you may only ever meet with them once. Both of these are important to help us grow, be nourished and be intentional. Get into reunion.

IV. Ultreya

We first hear the word Ultreya on the weekend. In Spanish, Ultreya is a word of encouragement that means “Onward,” “Persevere,” or simply “Hang in There!” The expression was originally associated with people walking a pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. James, in Spain. Pilgrims called out this word of encouragement to each other as they journeyed to the shrine.

We are on life’s pilgrimage. We strive and persevere. Sometimes we stumble and get side-tracked. We feel discouraged. We need to regularly refresh and renew our strength with the fellowship of encouraging travelers. Ultreyas are a place to do that. Weekends like this, are a place to do that.

An Ultreya is a meeting of group reunions where we witness together to our life in grace, challenge each other to persevere on our respective journeys, and achieve a deeper relationship with Christ. While reunion groups meet weekly, Ultreyas can be held as often as monthly. They involve floating reunions. Ultreyas also provide a means to renew the friendships made on the weekend, and opportunities to make new friends. Most importantly we share and encourage piety, study and action. Our next Ultraya is: _____

Reunion groups are Christian community. An Ultreya is a larger Christian community. Spiritual growth is the energy and affinity that both groups provide. In reunion or at Ultreyas, we know that we are not alone -- we are linked together in the love, fellowship, and encouraging relationships of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Ultreyas usually include the following elements: a devotion and prayer, music and singing, the announcement of upcoming events, presentation of a 10 minute 4th Day Walk topic, a 10 minute talk by a 4th day lay speaker or couple, a 5 or 10 minute reflection by a spiritual director, floating reunion group sharing, an informal pot luck meal, and a time of community prayer.

Ultreyas are the life-giving tools that offer us the opportunity to be faithful companions as we travel with Jesus on the road to His Father’s Kingdom. An important work here. Effective 4th Day Living requires a Church family in addition to any Cursillo family. Never! Never! Never be lulled into thinking you don’t need the regular nourishment of Word and Sacrament as a member of a local congregation!

Spiritual nourishment is so very vital to our being. In the words of St. Paul in Hebrews 10:24-25:

²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)

7. Now What?

Purpose

A discussion of commitment. Rededicating to 4th Day living and casting a vision of what Jesus will do in and through us. Encourage grouping within work environments including people from other 4th Day movements; Emmaus Walk, Kairos, Tres Dias, DeColores, etc. Give some examples of how you and others have impacted their environments for Christ.

Introduction

When you received your cross, you were reminded that “Christ is counting on you!” You responded, “And I am counting on Christ!” What is He counting on you for? It isn’t that Jesus doesn’t delight in our acts of piety, He does. But what He is truly looking for is our working for the Kingdom. Jesus told us we are to be His witnesses; we are to go teaching others how to obey everything He has commanded us. He asks us to become familiar with His voice, to move ahead at His direction. And, truth be told, it may require much from us.

In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 5 we read:

“But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

We saved this talk for this morning, because we know that people are easily intimidated. To speak this frankly of what God would have us be can be overwhelming. Our message this weekend is that he who empowered his apostles, even unto death, is here to empower His church today. We are the church together! The grace of God is available to us in all places, at all times! Christianity is much more than a religion; it is a lifestyle empowered by grace.

I. You heard the Environment Rollo on Sunday of your 3 Day Weekend

You were likely lavishing in a sea of grace and the importance of this Rollo may have slipped past you. The meditation that morning reminded all of us that we were created for “valley duty!” You were then instructed in how to transform your environments. First, you study the environments where you live. You find the true leaders. You seek God’s will – “Speak to God about man before speaking to man about God.” You make, be and live friendship. The whole Christian Community is there assisting you in every way. You use the 4th Day disciplines we have been reviewing to stay focused and make yourself accountable to others. Jesus Christ is counting on your willingness to serve so He may transform these environments!

Please know that you can form a reunion group in your work environment. Be open to the possibilities. Everyone who has made a 3-Day Weekend might make a reunion partner. You may discover people who have made their weekend in other 4th Day movements; Cursillo, Emmaus Walk, Kairos, Tres Dias,

DeColores, and others. Perhaps you will discover another faithful Christian. You could explain your personal mission and invite them to meet and pray with you. Your dedication will inspire their own dedication.

II. The Far Away

The message of Cursillo, while always open to possibilities, has as its priority to look for those 'furthest away.' The faraway are those who have never heard the good news of Jesus Christ or those who have walked away from it. It may be their nation of origin; their religious upbringing (or lack thereof). Perhaps life experiences have placed them mentally and emotionally far from Jesus. The faraway are with us everywhere. Your friendship is the bridge Jesus will use to reach out to them.

Recognizing the faraway is sometimes easy and obvious, their lifestyle screams of their distance from Jesus. Sometimes the faraway are disguised. They may be individuals who appear right with the world, may be regular attenders at church, but the gospel has never moved into their hearts!

We have all been there: Ephesians 2:13 "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." Christ is counting on us to befriend them. In our friendship bring the healing of the gospel. In our friendships Christ alone is our confidence. Remember it is not the quantity of faith that is important; faith as a grain of a mustard seed moves mountains. What is essential is the one in whom we place our faith.

III. Share ways in which Christ has worked through you.

(It may not be dramatic, but things Jesus has worked through you can inspire others to open themselves to the Holy Spirit)

- We may know that things will get worse, but we learn to trust Him through it
- Our confidence is in Jesus not in circumstances, we were not there when He created the universe.
- Philippians 3:3 we are the people of God, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God ... we do not put confidence in the flesh.
- You may lack of confidence. Good! Please do not depend on your own confidence or ability. You have the best friend humanity has. Just allow Him to shine friendship through you. Don't try to share salvation plans. Just be the friend that Jesus is. Love everyone with the love of Christ.

As I close hear Romans 8:14-17.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the children of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him."

You are the perfect disciple!