

## VIA DE CRISTO



### What is VIA de CRISTO?

VIA de CRISTO is a Spanish phrase meaning "Way of Christ." VIA de CRISTO is a highly structured three-day weekend designed to strengthen and renew the faith of Christian people and bring them to a new awareness of living in God's grace. It is a combined effort of lay people and clergy toward renewal of the church.

### History of VIA de CRISTO

The movement originated as "Cursillo" in the late 1940's in the Spanish Catholic church and moved to the United States in the late 1950's. It began in the Lutheran church when lay people and clergy attended a Catholic Cursillo in 1971, both in Iowa and Florida. The first Lutheran sponsored weekends were held in 1972 in Iowa and Florida and have now been held in over 25 states and some foreign countries. VIA de CRISTO is the Lutheran expression of this method, which is currently being used in many denominations including: Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed churches.

### Purpose of VIA de CRISTO

VIA de CRISTO is based on the fundamentals of Christianity, concentrating on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. The focus is not on VIA de CRISTO itself, but on the local church. The objective of the movement is to inspire, challenge and equip local church members for Christian action in their homes, churches and communities.

### What happens on a VIA de CRISTO weekend?

A VIA de CRISTO weekend is three days in length, beginning on Thursday evening and ending the following Sunday evening. The participants live, study, worship and commune together daily. Fourteen talks are given, nine by lay people and five by clergy. Following each talk, small round table discussions focus on the main points of the talk and a poster is done. The talks, in an overlapping fashion, present the Christian life, based on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. The titles of these talks indicate their content: Ideal, Piety, Study, Sacraments, Action, Obstacles to Grace, Leaders, Environment, Life in Grace, Christian Community, and Total Security. VIA de CRISTO gives those attending a living understanding of basic Christian truths. There is music and singing, food and fellowship, a time for laughter and for prayer.

### What happens after the weekend?

You may attend VIA de CRISTO only ONCE in your life, but you are asked to build on it for the rest of your life. After you have attended a VIA de CRISTO weekend you are considered a Fourth Dayer (meaning the rest of your life), and you are encouraged to 1) Expand your inner spiritual life through study and church participation, 2) Become more active witnesses for Christ in your daily life. VIA de CRISTO also offers two ongoing means of perseverance: 1) RENEWAL GROUPS, small groups of men or women who meet regularly to study, pray, share and help one another in their quest for spiritual development, 2) ULTREYA, gatherings of the local church VIA de CRISTO community for encouragement and fellowship.

### Who should attend a VIA de CRISTO weekend?

VIA de CRISTO is intended for lay people from every walk of life, for pastors, for people who live strong and active lives in Christ, and also for those who seek to be renewed and strengthened in their relationship with Christ and the people around them. VIA de CRISTO is open to married couples, and single men and women.

### Summary

Keep an open mind and heart in making your decision to attend VIA de CRISTO. Many of those who have attended also wondered whether they should go. Now that they have attended, they want to share this wonderful gift from God. Please understand that their experience attending VIA de CRISTO was unique, and all the conversations in the world will not become a substitute for your weekend. You need to experience a weekend yourself to obtain its full and life enriching value.

