

LEADERS

Recommended time: 30 minutes

I. Orientation

This is the last talk on Saturday, emphasizing every Christian's role as a leader in his/her own personal environments. It compliments the Apostolic Action talk, so it is important to keep in mind the main points of that talk: living in grace is the essence of Christianity; radiating God's love and grace is apostolic action; and we live to bring Christ and His love to all those around us. This talk emphasizes every Christian's role as a leader in his/her personal environments or spheres of influence. It does not refer only to those people who are able to shoulder responsibility in institutions or groups. Although some will say, "I wasn't born to be a leader," this talk will show that each person leads in his/her environments by using his/her God-given gifts and talents. This type of leadership is dependent on an on-going relationship with Christ: in Him, through Him and of Him. This talk begins to prepare participants as Christian leaders to return to the world they left on Thursday.

Changing the world depends on each of us. We show what a person empowered by Jesus' love can do when using his/her God-given talents in service to others. Leadership is not meant in the traditional view (president, director, etc.) but is leadership in the individual's own unique environment, utilizing his/her personal talents. Stress is placed on the responsibility of each of us to become a part of the process of transforming the world through Christian leadership. We all can and must do something as active members of the body of Christ. We are all potential leaders.

We want to give an idea of what can be done by a person who is using all of his/her talents and is empowered by the love of Christ to serve others. By "blooming where we are planted" and bearing fruit where we are, we are being Christian leaders. This talk explains the natural and supernatural qualities of leaders. Leaders offer all they have and only what they have or may come to have.

The principle points of this talk:

- Each person is a leader in his/her personal environments.
- Natural and supernatural qualities of leaders are developed by enhancing loving characteristics.
- Transforming the world depends on each individual Christian.
- Each individual is called to offer all of his/her individual talents in service to God in his/her natural environments.
- The group is more than the sum of its individual members when influencing an environment for God.

II. General Comments

As the last talk of the second day, Leaders makes all the talks of the day fall into place. Like the Piety talk, it presents a picture of a person who practices everything the previous talks presented -- a leader who has a personal relationship with Christ. With Christ as the center of life, Christian leaders influence those around them, leading others to desire a life of grace. As with all the talks of the second day, this talk emphasizes that becoming a Christian leader is hard work. It takes dedication, discipline, effort and an on-going relationship with Jesus. It cannot just be wished for. In summarizing the day and presenting the picture of a leader, the talk also emphasizes that what has been presented during the day

is possible. This should be the most inspiring talk of the day, because like the Piety talk, its message is, “This works! You can do it too!”

The Piety talk defines the purpose of the Via de Cristo weekend as living the life of grace. The Leaders talk defines it at a different level. It is easy to say that a person must direct his/her entire life to Christ and live the Christian ideal fully and unreservedly. It is another thing to do it. Deciding to become a Christian leader does not automatically result in being an effective Christian in the world. While the Piety talk is a call to be a Christian, the Leaders talk is a call to hear God’s call to be a leader and respond by completely giving oneself to Christ and His purpose for his/her life. A Christian leader hears Christ’s call, throws him/herself decisively into apostolic action and influences others. The weekend encourages each participant to be Christian, but it also encourages each one to be a leader affecting renewal in the Church and the world. This involves the long hard work of actual change, allowing God to change each one to become a more effective Christian leader who follows God’s call to change the world.

The weekend approach to leading a balanced Christian life has been visualized by the use of a tripod or three-legged stool. In order to develop this awareness and response, it is necessary to do the things summarized in the Piety, Study and Apostolic Action talks. The message of the weekend is that in living the Christian ideal, all of life is to be lived for Christ. Christian leaders are leaders in their environments, serving as active members of the body of Christ.

III. Atmosphere

For most participants, the atmosphere is one of expectation and joy. Many have established a new or deeper relationship with God. Others are struggling with their relationship with Him. The talk speaks to them by reassuring them that a Christian is a real person in every sense, struggling and growing to be human and holy, a mixture of faith and doubt. These people see, through the presentation of the qualities of a Christian leader, that it is a very desirable thing, exemplifying the finest qualities of humanity, fully human and fully alive.

In the preceding talks the participants have been given tools for living a balanced Christian life. Most are in a fairly receptive mood. Reservations they may have had are disappearing. Their concentration is high. They are searching out new ideas and discarding some old ones to which they had been clinging. They are beginning to make sense of what they have been hearing. They are wondering if they can actually apply this in the “real world.” On the other hand, some may be overwhelmed and believe themselves unable to serve as Christian leaders.

Some participants are beginning to think about all they left behind and the difficulties they will face. They have heard a new view of Christian life and many will be wondering if they can actually make personal changes or if they can have an effect in changing the world for Christ. This is the opportunity to inspire the participants with what can be achieved by a group of men and women who bring all their natural and supernatural abilities into action. The speaker is living proof that this is possible. The Leaders talk completes the second day, reassuring all and setting the stage for the third day, helping to remove doubts and anxieties.

IV. Suggestions for Writing this Talk

The Leaders talk is the inspirational talk of the day and includes much witnessing. It also contains a message that must be clearly presented. It emphasizes that each person's ability to be a leader must be cultivated and strengthened with God's help. Its intention is to give the participants enthusiasm for doing all the things that have been presented during the day. It should provide a living example of the man or woman who is trying to bring all of his/her abilities to serve God, in order to influence all people around them to live the Christian ideal. It is important that the participants understand that they are Christian leaders. They should enter the third day knowing that they are leaders for Christ. This is also the opportunity to reassure people that they can grow in their relationship with God and deepen their faith. This talk should give the participants a model of how to be effective in influencing their environments for Christ.

The Leaders talk contains much witnessing and a message: Christian leadership is not something we either have or do not have. It is something that can and must be cultivated and learned. Every Christian has leadership gifts and qualities that can be enhanced.

The talk should be simple in style, forthright and strong. Through examples, this talk should inspire the participants to visualize themselves as leaders. There are opportunities for telling stories of apostolic successes, stories that show that a Christian leader can influence his/her environments. All stories and/or witnesses should not be about instant successes, but some should show how, even through failure, a person can continue to grow. Success and failure are a part of life. Often unforeseen success is the result of what appeared at first to be a failure. Examples should show men and women in the community who are influencing their environments for Christ in situations similar to those of the participants.

A key emphasis of the talk is that Christian leadership can be cultivated, learned and practiced. Natural and supernatural qualities of leaders are explained with examples of each quality. The purpose of examples is to clarify a point and to show the importance of each quality of a leader. The sections explaining leadership characteristics and demonstrating how to combine the natural qualities with the supernatural qualities of a Christian leader should be the majority of the talk.

Interwoven through the talk are living examples of piety, study and apostolic action shown in the life of a Christian leader. These themes should be apparent. Prayer is the key to Christian leadership, and the point that a Christian leader is one who "prays as if everything depends on God and acts as if everything depends on him/her" should be clearly evident.

The speaker should be a living example of a Christian leader with his/her humanness evident. Personal stories are not to glorify the speaker, but rather to demonstrate a growth process, giving credit for success to God. The witness given in the talk must fit the level of the participants' understanding so that each person can see his/her place in God's plan. At the conclusion of this talk, participants should be able to understand what being a leader is, visualize themselves on the path to Christian leadership and believe that effective leadership qualities can be learned and/or enhanced in every person.

LEADERS OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. This weekend we are not asking the participants to undertake any special task, carry everyone's burdens or leave their world to join Via de Cristo.

- B. Tomorrow we will return to our places in the world—to our families, workplaces and congregations:
 1. With a new awareness of our part in God’s plan of salvation.
 2. With a desire to contribute all our talents to sharing the light and power of the gospel with our world.
- C. The love of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, empowers us, a nucleus of Christians, to:
 1. Commit ourselves completely to the service of others.
 2. Act in Christ, through Christ and with Christ.

When this happens, our part in the mission, the Christian transformation of society, will have begun. On that day we will be leaders.

II. DEFINITION

Leaders are people who influence the thinking and actions of others because of who they are and what they do.

- A. We are not talking about those who are “highly placed” or those who have a talent for organizing others. Every situation or environment has people in it who influence what happens. They may or may not be in an official leadership position, but they orient, guide and direct what happens.
- B. Leaders’ decisions, opinions, attitudes and actions influence the decisions, opinions, attitudes and actions of those around them.

III. NATURAL QUALITIES OF LEADERS

Each of us is unique and must remain so, but all leaders share certain natural qualities that make them effective.

In this section interweave examples of natural qualities of leaders.

- A. Spirit of Initiative.
 1. Ability to reach our own decisions.
 2. Courage to act upon those decisions.
 3. Cooperation with others -- lay and clergy.
- B. Willingness to risk.
 1. Observe the situation, judge what seems right, and then act. (Ephesians 6:16-18)
 2. Don’t fail to act for fear of being wrong.
 3. Stand alone and risk self where justice is needed. (Philemon 4:13)
 4. Wait and pray before acting if we believe this is what the Holy Spirit wants us to do.
- C. Sense of responsibility.
A leader feels responsibility for a mission.
- D. Personal authenticity.
 1. Be truthful with yourself.
 2. Be who you are created to be.
 3. Be what you say you are.
- E. Generosity.
 1. Give what you have, what you are, and what you can be.
 2. Give yourself totally.

These natural qualities must be continually developed and perfected through a deepening

relationship with God and the development of the following supernatural qualities.

IV. SUPERNATURAL QUALITIES OF LEADERS

Supernatural qualities are gifts from God.

Interweave examples of supernatural qualities of leaders.

A. Living Faith (Matthew 17:20, Ephesians 6:16)

1. Gives evidence of the living personal God who is always with us.
2. Frees us to continue our spiritual growth.
3. Is a continuous encounter with God in Christ.
4. Is a total 'yes' to God, a personal, mature and dynamic commitment.
5. Is reflected in the witness of our normal daily life.

B. Hope

1. Believes in the impossible and lives as if it were a reality. By our hope we make it a possibility. (Mark 9:23)
2. Conquers discouragement because the Lord is with us. Having trusted in God, we commit ourselves to liberating others to live for Christ. (Romans 12:12)
3. Is not to dream, but forms the basis upon which dreams become reality. (Hebrews 11:1) It comes from the knowledge that God is with us.
4. Hope is not just based upon eternal life but upon the knowledge that eternity begins here and now with our action to build the kingdom of God. God frees us from our slavery, whether imposed by others or self-imposed.
"I will be with you always until the end of time." (Matthew 28:20b)

C. Love:

1. Gives of self to others in service. (I Corinthians 13:1-3)
2. Reaches in and touches the heart of another as Christ would. (Romans 12:10)
3. Motivates our service to others. (John 15:13; Romans 13:8b)
4. Imitates Christ, as when He:
 - Fed the hungry.
 - Raised the dead.
 - Healed the sick.
 - Welcomed strangers.
 - Proclaimed the message.
 - Bore the scourges.
 - Evangelized.
 - Visited the prisoners.
 - Forgave others.
 - Gave Himself so we could live.
5. Brings life and hope to a troubled world.
6. Gives us a fresh start each day, putting the pain of yesterday behind us.

D. Humility (James 4:10a; Philippians 2:5-8)

1. Comes from our awareness that our abilities are gifts from God. (Ephesians 2:10)
2. Allows us to give God credit for all we do. It is not a feeling of inferiority but is accepting of our God given gifts.
3. Stems from our awareness that every person has his/her own God-given gifts and talents.

4. Allows us to recognize each of our talents and to value them.
5. Allows us to yield to God so He can use our talents for His purposes.
6. Nourishes all the other virtues and facilitates grace. (James 4:6)

V. CHRISTIAN LEADERS

Christian Leaders combine natural leadership abilities and supernatural qualities.

- A. Learn how to live their response to God, accepting and responding to whatever God has called them to do.
- B. Are aware of their responsibility to use their gifts to share Christ with others.
- C. Strive to use all their God-given resources in spite of their human limitations. Pray as if everything depends on God, and work as if everything depends on you! (II Corinthians 4:7)
- D. Are filled with the Gospel, accept responsibility for their world and commit themselves to improving their world.
- E. Christian leaders:
 1. Proclaim the power of the Gospel. (Romans 1:16)
 2. Invite natural leaders from their environments to a relationship with Christ.
 3. Help others discover God's call in their lives.
 4. Encourage other Christians to live up to their full, created potential. (Ephesians 4:1-3)
 5. Walk the talk.
- F. Christian leaders are involved in the world.
 1. We embrace God's plan; let it be ours. We accept responsibility to bring Jesus' love, compassion and wisdom to the affairs of the world. (John 3:16-17)
 2. We serve as Christ to ease the burdens and pain of others, especially man's inhumanity to man. (Galatians 6:2)
 3. Rather than running from sin and the world, we respond, by the example of our lives, to share Christ with those in all our environments.
 4. We are not to censor or preach. The testimony of our lives must be attractive to others. Instead of judging others, our lives should be living examples of truthfulness and self-giving that attract others to Christ.
 5. We enter the world and embrace it by calling it to freedom in Jesus.
- G. The Christian leader calls the community to its full potential.
 1. By prayerfully maintaining awareness of the state of the world.
 2. By calling the community to prayer, challenging it to grow and to become a light to the world, an example of faith in action.

Live out the call from God given us at the time of our baptism. Even where we lack talent, the Lord makes up for our deficiencies if we live in grace and give ourselves totally to Him. Christ and I are an overwhelming majority.

VI. ME, A LEADER?

- A. You are here because you are a leader in your family, work and other environments.
 1. You were placed in the world to influence others. (Romans 10:14-15; II Corinthians 3:3)
 2. Often we are leaders without realizing it.
- B. Continue to be a leader, but add Christ.
 1. Be a Christian where you are. Bloom where you are planted.

2. Be permeated by Christ to permeate your environments with Christ.
3. All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good people do nothing.
4. No one can do everything, but each person can do something. (Matthew 25:14-20; Luke 19:12-28).

VII. CONCLUSION

- A. The world will receive the good news through leaders like each one of us here, as we influence others for Christ.
 1. Not through those who are sad, discouraged, impatient, or anxious.
 2. But through those individuals whose lives radiate the joy and peace of the love of Christ and are dedicated and consecrated to Him.
- B. Christ counts on us as a group, a nucleus of Christians, to put our love of God and our talents into action:
 1. Offering only what we have but all that we have.
 2. Guided by the Holy Spirit.
 3. Bearing witness to the Word
 4. Moved by Christian love to serve the truth.

CLARIFICATION OF LEADERS OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The participants are here because God has called them to be here. “It was not you who chose me; it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit.” (John 15:16) The introduction reassures participants they are not called to leave their own environments to be effective leaders. Via de Cristo is not an organization one joins but rather a movement that encourages and empowers people to lead a balanced Christian life. We are to fulfill our responsibilities as followers of Christ in our families, our churches, our work places, our social gatherings and wherever we may be.
- B. Participants are reminded that they will return to their lives after the weekend. They will have a new awareness of their part in God’s plan of salvation and the opportunity to “bear fruit” in service to God by living lives of piety, study and apostolic action in a newer, fuller way. Christian leadership is using our talents to share Christ with others and thus be “fruitful.”
- C. This is a short summary of the Apostolic Action talk that introduces participants to the purpose of this talk – to be Christ-centered leaders in their environments. It supports the proposition that all of us are leaders for Christ since we all have influence in some area. Simply by being Christians, we have influence on the people and atmosphere around us through:
 1. Making a commitment to the service of others through our response to God’s love for us.
 2. Acting in Christ’s love, being Christ-like to others, being leaders in a new way, as leaders for Christ.

II. DEFINITION

Leaders are people who influence the thinking and actions of others because of who they are

and what they do.

- A. Typically leadership is defined as an official leadership position, such as director, president, manager, etc. This talk shows that an official title is not necessary to be a leader.
- B. People are led in all situations, and those who lead are not always those in positions of power. We all are leaders, influencing others through our decisions, opinions, attitudes, and actions. This new definition poses the concept that anyone in any position has influence, including home, work, social activities and all environments. Since each of us has influence on others, each of us has the potential to be the kind of leader God created us to be.

III. NATURAL QUALITIES OF LEADERS

The qualities that Christian leaders share are distinguished here as natural and supernatural. Leaders of people everywhere share certain natural qualities that enable them to lead. These qualities are well-documented in literature concerned with leadership and success.

- A. Spirit of Initiative
 - 1. Leaders have the ability to reach their own decisions or follow through on the decisions of others. They perceive and act within their limitations, abilities and influence to fill the need.
 - 2. Leaders have the ability to plan and act decisively with courage. They acknowledge reality in the environment, assess direction and resources, consider the problems and are aware of the feelings of the people around them and then courageously act.
 - 3. Leaders cooperate with others toward a common goal or mission. In families, in business, in churches or socially, leaders work together to accomplish the common or agreed upon goal.
- B. Willingness to risk.
 - 1. Leaders recognize a need through observation, do the research when appropriate, consider all possibilities, come to conclusions and then step out. Leaders recognize the necessity to act, and in doing so, are willing to take risks.
 - 2. Leaders are willing to risk failure, unfavorable criticism, or error for a just cause. They admit when they are wrong, ask forgiveness, and start over.
 - 3. If necessary, leaders are willing to stand alone to risk self for a just cause. The goal is important and the risk worth the effort.
 - 4. Sometimes the Holy Spirit nudges us to wait and to do nothing at that time. Pray and listen to the Holy Spirit's direction.
- C. Sense of responsibility.

Life is a challenge. Leaders are able to respond to life's challenges and make themselves accountable for their actions. This requires discipline and obedience to follow God's will and not their own. To be responsible is to have empathy, to identify with others and to treat people with real concern, warmth and respect. Leaders have anxiety and fears but know that it is God's grace that makes us strong.
- D. Personal authenticity.
 - 1. Natural leaders are truthful with themselves, trustworthy and keep their word.

2. Leaders recognize their own personal qualities and talents and work within them to reach their potential.
3. Natural leaders are genuine. They do what they say they will do. They live as they portray themselves to be.

E. Generosity

1. Generosity means that we give what we have, what we are and what we can become. Leaders give of their time, their talents and their treasures, if necessary.
2. They are willing to give all of themselves without keeping score. They enable people to grow and develop their talents. When necessary, leaders teach and correct with compassion and acceptance of the person.

To grow in effectiveness, natural leadership qualities must continually be developed. To serve the Lord to the highest degree, Christian leaders actively pursue a closer relationship with God and work to develop their natural qualities.

IV. SUPERNATURAL QUALITIES OF LEADERS

Supernatural qualities come from a relationship with God -- qualities that God produces in us. The gifts of natural qualities and supernatural qualities combined are oriented to the service of Christ. Supernatural qualities transform natural leaders into Christian leaders.

A. Living Faith

1. The faith that is discussed here is not the faith of dogmas or statements but the faith that speaks of the person's relationship with God; the faith that arises when a person realizes that God has sought him/her and lived with him/her from the person's beginning. (Hebrews 12:2)
2. Living faith, understood this way, is liberating, because renewal is always in progress.
3. Living faith is a continuous encounter with God in Christ in which the initiative comes from God. When God calls to the depths of a person, He enables that person to accept the call to faith. The response is to submit freely to the will of God. (Galatians 2:20)
4. Living faith is a person's total "Yes" to God's call, a stepping out in trust. A child passively accepts what s/he is taught. A Christian leader is moved by a faith that is personal, mature and dynamic. This leads to a true commitment to love the world that God loves.
5. Our faith is obvious to others by the way we live. This allows us to be God's instruments. God calls us to be faithful, not necessarily successful. With God, all things are possible!

B. Hope

1. Hope believes that the impossible is possible through God and lives as if the impossible could be reality.
2. Hope turns to God when discouragement comes. Hope comes from knowing God is with us, knowing the work is His and persevering when human hope is gone.
3. Hope trusts in God and is the basis upon which dreams become reality. Hope sustains us during difficult times.
4. Hope is not based solely on the promise of eternal life to come but upon the knowledge that eternity begins now. God frees us from our slavery, whether

imposed or self-imposed. We are freed to achieve a true relationship with God and to help build His kingdom.

C. Love

1. Love is more than another quality; it gives feeling, vigor and effectiveness to the other qualities. It is in the spirit of love that we serve the Lord.
2. Love is the giving of self to others in Christ's service and expecting nothing in return. The level of self-giving is the level of one's humanity and spirituality. This is the spirit of God's love lived through us in Apostolic Action.
3. Christian leaders love others as Christ has loved us. The Christian's calling is to serve with the spirit of Christ's love. "We love because He first loved us." (I John 4:19)
4. Love is not limited to other Christians but to be shared with all, with everyone. The gospel message is not restrictive. It does not tell Christians that they can limit their love to other Christians or to those of the same social level or to those of the same skin color or to those who speak the same language -- the list of prejudices and pain-causing reactions is endless. Indeed, the call is for the opposite. The Christian must reach out in love wherever pain exists, in those situations in which it would be much easier to sit back and observe.

The love from God is manifested through us to those in need. There are no mitigating circumstances that excuse or allow for non-love. It is these situations where a person fails to love another that all people sin. Love is forgiving, generous, active and serving. Love knows every person is special in God's eyes. God will judge our service to others. (Matthew 25:34-40)

5. Love brings life and hope to a troubled world. The loving Christian has an obligation to reach out to those in painful situations, whether it be to help reduce prejudice of any kind or to help the poor, the juvenile delinquent, the alcoholic, etc.
6. Love is continually renewed and does not tire or get bogged down in the past. Love does not keep count but starts fresh daily.

D. Humility

Humility is sometimes a difficult quality to understand.

1. Humility is the quality that allows us as Christians to recognize our smallness in relation to God and to avoid taking personal credit for all we do. Humility uses all our talents but acknowledges them as gifts from God.
2. Humility is not thinking less of ourselves or having a low opinion of our gifts. It is the freedom not to think of ourselves at all nor to compare ourselves to others.
3. Humility teaches us that all persons are special and unique in God's eyes, no matter how badly the people have been misused or become twisted. Christ loves the Christian to the point of dying for him/her. He also died for the alcoholic, for the prisoner (no matter what the deed), for the homeless, for the successful politician and businessman -- for all! Only the truly humble recognize that all people are as sought after by God as they are themselves.
4. Humility allows us to explore all of our abilities, to acknowledge all of our talents and to put them to use. It allows us to value the gifts God has given us.
5. Humility allows us to avoid "self." We pray and wait, listen to God's word and allow Him to direct our thoughts, words and actions.

6. A proud person sees oneself as the source of one's own talents and, therefore, assumes that a person has the right to use his/her own talents as s/he sees fit. The humble person recognizes God as the source and accepts the responsibility to use God's gifts well.

V. CHRISTIAN LEADERS

- A. Christian leaders integrate natural qualities with the God-given supernatural qualities. John 15:16 says, "It was not you who chose me; it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit." Christian leaders are chosen by God to share the Good News and to respond to whatever He has called them to do.
- B. As Christian leaders we are asked to make use of our God-given talents, accepting our responsibility to serve others in order to build a better world. No matter the number of our talents, each is asked to use them in service to Christ. We all are witnesses to our family, friends and co-workers and are challenged to utilize our God-given resources.
- C. As humans we all have limitations and make mistakes. This should not keep us from using our talents. God knows our talents; He gave them to us. Can we accept this challenge? The apostle must work as if everything depended on him/her and pray as if everything depended on God.
- D. Christian leaders proclaim the total gospel, calling others to Jesus. They need not travel the globe but rather are to minister to their own unique environments. This makes the task so available and so simple that it is difficult to find reasons to decline. Participants now face the choice to accept God's call, a fearful choice for many. Some feel inadequate. To accept His call to utilize all talents in His service is a major challenge. Presentation of the material, clearly showing that our talents are from God and are used for Him in faith, will assist participants in deciding to accept the challenge.
- E. Christian leaders:
 1. Are knowledgeable about the gospel, and God's power within us gives us the ability to share the gospel with others in our environments.
 2. Share Christ's calling with natural leaders in our environments to develop a relationship with Christ.
 3. Recognize the uniqueness of each person as we assist him/her to recognize his/her calling from God;
 4. Are respectful of others as we try to help each person in his/her own way, calling others to their fullness in Christ.
 5. Live the Christian life as we proclaim it so that the love of Christ shines through us as a beacon to attract others.
- F. Christian leaders are involved in the world.
 1. We know God's plan to "love your neighbor as yourself" and are willing to live out that call. It requires being ready to reach out, take the risk, speak up, share love in His service and accept God's plan as our own. If we truly love one another, we cannot stand by idly. Christians with love and empathy for others will be willing to risk all to help because this is helping Christ himself. If we accept this responsibility, we will build a Christian community.
 2. It is vital for Christians to fill needs as we see them. Our task is to recognize the pain of the world in families, neighborhoods, society, work places and the

- nation. Christian leaders are called to make humanity whole.
3. We must be willing to face the evil of this world in our own environments. Persons willing to risk themselves and their positions by proclaiming the truth overcome evil. This is frightening in an unfriendly atmosphere. If care and love are used to discuss the issues, it is surprising how many will do what is right. The vision of the kingdom of God is important enough to take that risk.
 4. Christians are charged to love as Jesus loved. If we truly love others, we cannot stand by and watch as they hurt. Christian love and empathy for others requires action, loving as Christ loved despite our tendency to judge others. We share the gentle touch of Jesus with all humanity. We allow Christ to speak through us as we respond and fill the needs of others. Our lives demonstrate our true love of Jesus.
 5. Christian leaders lovingly bring others to see the value of faith in Jesus, and we bring others to follow Christ, calling the world to evangelical freedom. Jesus was in the world but not of the world – living in it, seeing his Father in it but pained by the poor treatment of one person by another. Christ died for the world to bring us true freedom.
- G. The Christian leader calls the community to its full potential.
1. Christians live in the fullness of Christ through piety, study and apostolic action. It is important to stress the unique differences of each person as precious gifts from God that strengthen the community. Prayerful attention to the state of the world will assist Christians to view themselves as special in their own environments. They are connected to God through faith, and this helps them form a bond with others in the community.
 2. God is counting on Christians to be leaders for Him. Christians need to grow spiritually and are created to become beacons of light to the world around them. People everywhere need Christ and His touch through Christian leaders.

Christians are asked to use their God-given talents, to live out their sense of responsibility and to engage in service to others. They live out their baptismal call to live in grace and give themselves totally to the Lord. The response to grace will be different in each person. One will have five talents; another two and the third will have one. Each person is to use fruitfully his/her talents for the benefit of others in order to build a better world through Christ.

VI. ME, A LEADER?

- A. Remind participants they were called by God to attend this weekend.
1. Every person is a leader. All of us witness to our family and friends, influencing them in some way. Whether positive or negative, our witness causes people to change and modify their lives to some extent. Therefore, we all are leaders who influence the thinking and actions of others. (II Corinthians 3:3)
 2. Christians lead others whether we are aware of this or not. Others watch and are influenced by our actions.
- B. We need to keep on being leaders wherever we are.
1. As Christians, we are called to work for Christ faithfully using the gifts He has given us. We must consciously develop and direct our natural qualities to

bring the world to the Christian ideal. We are to be the light of the world, the leaven and the salt of the earth.

2. As we let our souls be filled with the light of Christ, we become more like Christ intended. We participate in God's saving plan for the world. We are responsible for our small corners of the earth as we orient and influence others for Christ. It is enough to develop our individual talents; the rest depends on Christ. (II Corinthians 2:14-17)
3. If we do not proclaim the call of God, evil will continue to affect people. If good people remain silent in the face of pain and injustice, the world will miss the rich and life-giving message of the Gospel, the joy of being free in the Lord.
4. God lives in each person. Each Christian is called to be a leader. Our talents are not equal; no one person can do everything, but every person has something to contribute. Together we can change the world.

VII. CONCLUSION

The conclusion is a swift-moving dynamic call for each person to answer his/her personal call from Christ. It is a summation of the talk in a ringing style meant to end the day on a strong, positive note that "it can work."

- A. Our world will change when each person answers his personal invitation from Jesus. Christians are called to be Christ's leaders in their environments.
 1. The world is full of people who are sad, discouraged, impatient, or anxious. Each person struggles to overcome these obstacles throughout life.
 2. The world is waiting for the joyful witness of the Christian life. The Christian is called to be the herald of God's kingdom, the harbinger of hope that is active and creative, unbreakable and contagious, flowing from the Easter cross. Each person struggles through the fear and loneliness in the world. A Christian leader is privileged to share the love and self-giving of Jesus that answers those universal needs. Christian leaders work together, using all their God-given talents to serve God.
- B. Christ counts on Christians to put their love of Him into action through using their talents. Apostolic Christians offer all they have, are guided by the Holy Spirit and bear witness. We work as a community, drawing others to Christ. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:15-20) The community has a power that is greater than the sum of the individuals. This point foretells the next day's talks.

"Without God, I am nothing; but Christ and I are an overwhelming majority!"