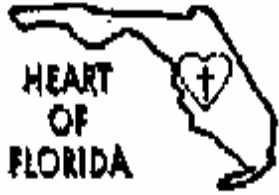
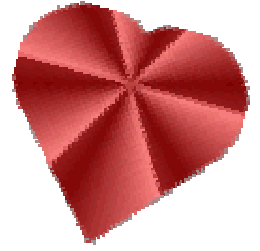


Strait From The



A New Year...A New Life.....New Opportunities

Another New Year has begun! Christmas has just passed. Every year at Christmas we celebrate the beginning of a new life of grace at Jesus' birth. God sent his Son that our sins might be forgiven and our daily life with God might begin again. Let us embrace our new life with God in Christ as it is God's greatest purpose for our life. At this time of the year, everyone is making resolutions for the New Year. But resolutions often get lost in the shuffle of daily life and we look back with regret at those broken promises we made to ourselves. The gift of Grace that God brought us on that first Christmas means that taking a new step in our life of faith is not at all like a resolution. You don't have to feel bad when things don't work out and you don't have to wait for

the next New Year to try again. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-

not done before. They are revealed to us by God and come from the new life granted in Christ. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17). The new life in Christ causes us to look at the world in a new way... looking for opportunities to let our light shine! So look around you for those surprise opportunities. Walk with Him

in your Fourth Day and share His love to all around you, become more involved in your congregation, extend your friendship to someone new. Go Light Your World!!

Blessings,
Sandy Moore
Lay Director



23). God's mercy is new every morning! Dedicate your day each morning to God and begin the day with the new energy that God's grace makes possible.

Perhaps then, instead of making resolutions, we could be looking for New Opportunities. Resolutions have a focus on the past, but New Opportunities focus on the future. They are guaranteed to be new because they have yet to be shown to us. They are surprises! They are things we have



Heart of Florida
Via De Cristo
Mission Statement

Our mission is to develop and nurture Christian leaders to reach out with Christ's love in faith and acceptance to those in our churches and communities.

Of Advent, Bridges, and Spring

By now, most everyone has put away the gifts, decorations, and advent readings we were so absorbed with only a few weeks ago. But as I write this article, I carry a sense of the word "bridge" in my thoughts - because Christmas is six days away and advent preparation, gladdening decorations, and gift-giving are capturing my attention 'though I'm looking ahead to our mid-January newsletter. I feel like a bridge between what is and what is to come.

We are in winter, but spring is just around the corner. It's cool, but warm days and spring's fragrant flowers will soon return because God has promised that as long as the earth remains he will send the seasons. He is the bridge between what is and what is to come. He knows what awaits us on the other side of the

bridge, and he is thrilled to give us the gifts he has already arranged for us there.

Isn't this the way with a Via de Cristo experience? We couldn't have known

"I feel like a bridge between what is and what is to come."

what awaited us unless someone offered themselves as a bridge to that life-changing weekend. Why do we extend ourselves to another? Because we know what awaits. We know the Lord will meet that person on the weekend. And we know the warmth of the Holy Spirit can transform the winter places of a heart to fragrant life-giving spring.

While you are in Florida winter mode, think

spring. This is the time to plant spring seed by offering yourself to someone as a bridge to the upcoming spring Via de Cristo weekends. The women's weekend is filling up quickly and there are several openings on the men's weekend. So, dust off the applications you tucked away over the Christmas season. Take them with you as you take Christ with you from one occasion to the next and give the gift of invitation as opportunities present themselves. Someone in your life is in a spiritual advent season, waiting for what is yet to come on their growth journey, and you can be the Via de Cristo bridge that leads them there. Will you?

Karen Hanson
Pre-Via de Cristo



Thanks from Fast Eddie

Ed Soistman, longtime lay minister at St. John and active participant on many Via de Cristo weekends, has had several burglaries of his home in the past. His friends, many from the Via de Cristo community, wanted him to have an alarm system installed. The following is his letter of thanks:

To: All Via de Cristo Angels, What a blessing to know there are those who "walk the talk" every minute of their 4th Day. Thanks a million for your loving concern about my home security. Today, on December 15th I had an alarm system installed and signed a 3 year contract with ADT Alarm Sys-

tem in my home. DeColores! May God bless each of you with a Merry Christmas for you know the reason for the season.

*Your Brother in Christ,
Fast Eddie
Too Blessed to be Stressed*

YOU'RE SOMETHING SPECIAL

Out with the old, in with the new. Yes, the "holidays" are a memory now.

Decorations packed away, gifts forgotten or broken and moving on to Valentine's Day !!

Can anything separate us from the love Christ has for us?

God answered our question before we asked it.

So we'd see his answer, he lit the sky with a star.

So we'd hear it, he filled the night with a choir; and so we'd believe it, he did what no man had ever dreamed.

He became flesh and dwelt among us . . .

He placed his hand on the shoulder of humanity and said,

"You're something special."

-Max Lucado

As we begin a new year let's remember that God

made each of us "special" Be fearless to share with others and bring that friend to Christ.

God gives us tangible reminders everyday of his gift of grace, Jesus.

Look for those reminders and continue to live joyfully for Christ, others will want to follow you!

Blessings,
Jan Fry
Extended Palanca



Weekends # 32



We are four months away from the next Heart of Florida Via De Cristo weekends (#32.) Did you submit your *Willingness To Serve* form? Did you ask the "someone" God placed on your heart to attend the weekend? Did you use the application we sent you in December? Do

you need another one? We enclosed another application for your use in calling all pilgrims to this blessed experience. Remember, it's getting close.... The weekends will be held as follows:

Men: April 27-30, 2006
Rector: Bob Blasberg
Women: May 4-7, 2006

Rectora: Martha Harri-
man

Let's show Bob and Martha and the entire community our support. Christ is counting on you, are you answering the call?

Outreach Happenings . . .

Your Outreach committee delivered meals to Anna Vetter's sons to help make life a little easier on the family during Anna's last five treatments. We spent the day with Anna and were blessed to see Anna's smile and watch Anna do for us...LOVING people make wonderful friends!

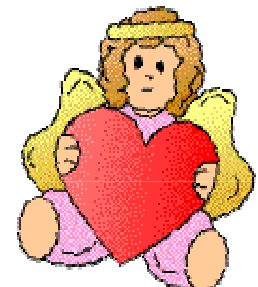


Spirit of Joy has moved into their new church building and the outreach committee had a table in the art room at the JOYFEST to help with their celebration. The visiting children glittered Autumn Harvest pumpkins, and fun was had by all who

attended!

Stay tuned for more happenings coming your way...

Tammy Bryan
Outreach



7 CHALLENGES FOR 2006

As Chairman of Post Via de Cristo, I am challenging each of you to recommit yourselves to our new mission statement: *"Our Mission is to develop and nurture Christian leaders to reach out with Christ's love in faith and acceptance to those in our churches and communities."*

- ◇ Find or start a reunion group in 2006 (if you do not belong to one now.) The existing groups list can be down loaded from our new website at www.hofvdc.org. It only takes two to make a reunion group. There are other groups that meet that we do not know about. Please help us update the lists to share with others.
- ◇ Update the reunion

groups cited in the "Download and Links" section of the website listing. Changes can be made by responding directly to the website by filling out the "comments" in the "Update Your Information Section" or by going to the Secretariat page and sending an email to me by clicking on my name.

- ◇ Invite new Cursillistas or those you know are not grouping to join your reunion group. To have more green card discussion and altar visits in your groups.
- ◇ Attend the Ultreyas and events cited in the 2006 calendar. Especially notice and attend our startup potluck Ultreya

at the new church, Spirit of Joy on January 21.

- ◇ Sponsor pilgrims for the weekends. Make a friend, be a friend, bring your friend to Christ. (Applications are on the website)
- ◇ Submit a willingness to serve form for the weekends and actively participate. (Forms are on the website)
- ◇ Attend the openings, serenades, and closings of the weekends. Actively seek out new pilgrims to welcome them and encourage their participation.

Bob Blasberg
Post Via de Cristo



2006 "Magnificent 7" Grand Ultreya

Sonbeam VdC is hosting the 2006 Florida Grand Ultreya on January 14, 2006. Last years Grand Ultreya was held in Orlando and hosted by Heart of Florida VdC. Several of the Sonbeam members attended so let's show our support by joining them this year!

The format will be similar to our Ultreyas. Details are as follows:

DATE:

Saturday, January 14, 2006

TIMES:

5:00 PM – 8:00 PM -

LOCATION:

Bayside Community Church of God
3380 State Road 580
Safety Harbor, FL

Happy New Year 2006!

The New Year is upon us and it is time to look forward to opportunities to serve. As you ponder how to dig deeper in your Fourth Day, here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ Join a Bible Study and dig deeper into HIS Word
- ◆ Check with your pastor or the leadership in your church and learn where you can serve. All our churches need servants!
- ◆ Spend time at your church's coffee hour and "Make a Friend". Don't seek out your current friends....make a New Friend.
- ◆ Volunteer to feed the homeless or help with a special mission at your church
- ◆ Invite your New Friend to a special function at your church
- ◆ Invite your New Friend to a weekend
- ◆ Take part in the "Magnificent 7 Grand Ultreya" in Safety Harbor on January 14. They came to Orlando, let us travel to them! (Check the website for details).
- ◆ Think about how you can support the weekends. Teams are only a small part. We need bakers, we need shoppers, and we need hands and feet! Contact Ken Raue (VdC4opa@aol.com) and join the VdC



Ghost Corp. or Jackie Gorbutt to bake some goodies to feed the masses! (godskid52@aol.com)

- ◆ Volunteer to help with the Easter Breakfast...more on that later
- ◆ Even better yet...volunteer to coordinate the Agape Tent for either weekend. Do it yourself or do it as a Reunion Group. This is a most rewarding experience. You will be far more blessed than you can imagine! Contact Jackie Gorbutt

◆ If you can not commit to the whole weekend, then come and spend time in the Agape Tent. Whatever time you can manage. Fellowship, prayer and love! What more can you wish for!

- ◆ Then there is always "Green Palanca". It costs \$\$\$ to support the ministry and many who attend a weekend are unable to give towards the next weekend.
- ◆ Pray, Pray, Pray. Pray for your church family, your church leadership, your family, your friends, the coming weekends, the leadership of the weekends, your whole Via de Cristo Community.



YOU are Special...and in My Prayers!

Sandy



Note To You....

Hi dear Friends in Christ!

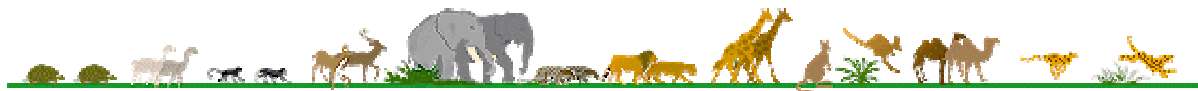
How I wished I could be there for the 20th Anniversary. I remember that being on #1 gave me a great new support system and many new friends for life. You are all in my prayers each day.

God loves you and so do I.

~Ellen Jane "EJ" Erb

P.S. I love my new home studio and the wonderful health care I have. So call if anyone is headed this way (LA County).

**1428 S. Marengo Ave. P12
Alhambra, CA 91803
Phone 626-293-7561**



Transportation to the Grand Ultreya on January 14

Please join the Orlando Secretariat on this 4th day walk to the "Magnificent 7" Grand ULTREYA, which will be held on January 14th at Bayside Community Church of God in Safety Harbor (the Pinellas Tampa

area.) Car pooling from Orlando is being planned by the Outreach Committee. We will leave Orlando at Noon and enjoy lunch together on the road. Please contact Tammy Bryan at 407-658-8505 or email her at

helenbryan@bellsouth.net for more information about the carpooling.

God Bless!

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication



Who's Approval is Required?

Jesus said, "I do not accept glory from human beings."

-- John 5:41 (NRSV)

HOW important is earning human approval to you? Personally, I have to admit that the need for it sometimes dominates my life. But in the Bible we have Jesus' example of being free of the need for human approval.

I buy clothes wondering what my daughters will say: "Too dorky, too young, too old for me!" I wait anxiously for approval at the dinner table before I can enjoy the meal I prepared. More seriously, I test the waters very carefully before uttering a controversial word in a group. What will "they" think?

Jesus, however, did not look for human approval. He spoke the truth -- always. He looked only for God's approval. He was invited to dinner at a Pharisee's house and then began speaking the truth about the scribes and Pharisees, insulting as it was.



He was not even polite in the host's home, as we define politeness. Truth took precedence. If Jesus had made choices that earned human approval, he would never have been hated. He would never have given anyone a reason to crucify him. But Jesus would have failed God, and that was unthinkable for him.

Prayer: Source of truth and salvation, change us from depending on humans to depending on your approval alone. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

It's not what people think but what God thinks that matters.

--Daily Email Devotional
Submitted by
Nancy Cifuentes



**COMMIT YOUR
WORK TO THE LORD,
AND YOUR PLANS
WILL BE ESTABLISHED.**

~PROVERBS 16:3

Dear Rooster...

Dear Rooster:

I have a candidate in mind for the spring weekends, but I am not sure what to say when they begin to ask me questions about what the weekend involves. Can you make some recommendations on what to say and what not to say?



Sincerely,
~Fishing for God's Kingdom
Altamonte Springs, FL

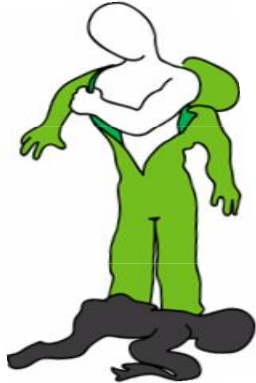
Dear Seeking:

I am SOOOO glad you asked that question! It is very difficult to contain your excitement when you are speaking of the week-

ends because all we remember is the love, care, and the fellowship with others we experienced on ours. Use that as your guide...talk of experiencing God's love, how God met all of your needs that weekend which opened up the possibility of being available to hear God's message. Then you can mention the fellowship opportunities which further enhances God's love for us. Also share with them how the tools taught over the weekend, like the renewed Bible study and dedication of each day to God, help change your perspective on life. This leads to more active participation in your congregation and strengthened relationships. You do not have to be dishonest about your answer, nor do you have to hold back a response. Just answer the candidates questions with candor and do not offer more than what the question asks so that the pilgrim will not be inhibited by knowing too much. Re-

member, each weekend is designed specifically for the Pilgrim's chosen by God, so it's up to God to make it what the Pilgrim needs. You fulfill your part by presenting the opportunity, submitting the application on behalf of the Pilgrim, then following up once the weekend is over to ensure they are connected in a Reunion Group. For additional information about what happens on a weekend, you can visit <http://www.hofvdc.org/What%20happens%20.htm>.

Thanks for your question, and Happy Fishing!



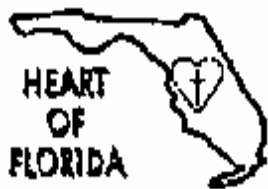
Examination of Conscience

Do I have other "idols" like work, sports, hobbies, etc. that take a higher priority than Christ does?

WHAT CAN I DO TODAY THAT WILL SHOW CHRIST I TRULY LOVE HIM?

2006 Heart of Florida Via de Cristo Secretariat

Lay Director	Sandy Moore (407-886-0532) email: sandymoore@cfl.rr.com
Secretary	Joyce Whitehill (407-382-8832) email: joyceEWYR@msn.com
Treasurer	Bill Pohlad (407362-1731) email: sablebill@cfl.rr.com
Leaders	Jim & Diane DeMark (407-897-3669) email: jdemark@cfl.rr.com
Music	****OPEN****
Local Palanca	Jackie Gorbutt (407-729-1862) email: godskid52@aol.com
Extended Palanca	Jan Fry (407-898-7435) email: ffryj@bellsouth.net
Physical Arrangements (On-Site)	Ken Raue (407-277-6011) email: VdC4opa@aol.com
Physical Arrangements (Off-Site)	Del & Martha Harriman (407-876-0121) email: mharriman@cfl.rr.com
Outreach	Tammy Bryan (407-658-8505) email: helenbryan@bellsouth.net
Post Via de Cristo	Bob Blasberg (407-381-1620) email: bnblasberg@cfl.rr.com
Pre Via de Cristo	Karen Hanson (407-977-0418) email: svenska77kh@aol.com
Communications	Tammy Ortiz (407-340-2868) email: vdctammy@earthlink.net
Spiritual Director	Pastor Dave Ludwig (407-366-5705) email: dcludpud@aol.com
Spiritual Advisor	Pastor Tom McRee (407-774-6639) email: tmcree@cfl.rr.com

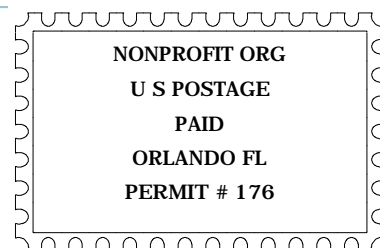


Heart of Florida Via De Cristo
c/o St. John Lutheran Church
1600 South Orlando Avenue
Winter Park, Florida 32789
E-mail: vdcTammy@earthlink.net

***To develop and nurture Christian leaders...
(see our Mission Statement!)***

WE'RE ON THE WEB!!

[HTTP://WWW.HOFVDC.ORG](http://www.hofvdc.org)



Funny Corner

A Christian Pet

This Christian couple felt it important to own an equally Christian pet. So, they went shopping. At a kennel specializing in this particular breed, they found a dog they liked quite a lot.

When they asked the dog to fetch the Bible, he did it in a flash. When they instructed him to look up Psalm 23, he complied equally fast, using his

paws with dexterity. They were impressed, purchased the animal, and went home.

That night they had friends over. They were so proud of their new dog and his major skills, they called the dog and showed off a little.

The friends were impressed, and asked whether the dog was able to do any of the usual dog tricks, as well. This stopped the couple cold, as they hadn't

thought about "normal" tricks. Well, they said, "Let's try this out." Once more they called the dog, and they clearly pronounced the command, "Heel!"

Quick as a wink, the dog jumped up, put his paw on the man's forehead, closed his eyes in concentration, and bowed his head... ☺

