

The piety talk is the last talk on Friday evening and completes the theme of the day “The Encounter with Self”. This talk should be no more than 40 minutes long.

Up until now the talks have been pretty low key. This/here hasn’t been much mention of God or personal witness. The Piety Talk is one of the most effective talks of the weekend and if given correctly is one that has the most impact on the participants.

It should be presented in such a way that the candidates may see in the speaker the truths revealed in the “Habitual Grace” and “Actual Grace” Talk through the living testimony of the Speaker. It presents the picture of someone who is truly growing and living this ideal in their normal, everyday life and should demonstrate the difference the increased love of God and man has made.

The opening of this talk should not only summarize the previous talks of the day but should point out that Piety encompasses one’s whole life, that the Christian person must be 100% Christian 100% of the time, and not just someone who does Christian things.

It is at this point that the candidates start to realize that they need to respond in a way they never have before and begin the process of putting God first in his/her life. This can be a very confusing

time for them because they do not know how they are going to be able to achieve this in their own lives.

The transition of the candidates begins when the speaker presents the concepts of false Piety. The speaker needs to counteract all of the preconceived ideas that the candidates have regarding false concepts of piety by pointing out the more ridiculous attitudes in a very realistic manner. It is important for the speaker not to get too carried away with examples but to make sure to give a concrete image of false piety.

The first false idea, the sanctimonious, should be presented humorously; the second false idea, the practitioner, can be somewhat humorous, but should show some sympathy as well. The third false idea, the Pharisees, should be presented with strength. These details are very valuable for bringing to life what a person's life would be like if he/she held these false ideas. Often the candidates hold these ideas subconsciously. Once these ideas are brought to consciousness, they can easily be discarded. The speaker should not spend more than ten minutes on this section of the talk.

At this point it is extremely important to firmly establish the true concept of piety and highlight the characteristic notes of true piety, but the main impact of the Talk comes from the personal witness

of the speaker. In the speaker, the candidates should see a concrete and realistic way to live a life of true piety. They should see how successful and how attractive it can be. What was meaningless or distasteful to them before... now becomes something they have seen not only as valuable and attractive, but possible.

Often the biggest challenge to the Speaker is identifying his/her own true piety. We must remember that authentic Piety is not how many rosaries we say or how many masses we attend. It is the orienting of our life towards God, doing our very best to carry out His will and His desire regardless of our own personal will and desire.

This/here are three parts to a good personal testimony:

1. The condition the speaker was in before he/she began to direct his/her whole life to God.
2. How the speaker came about realizing the value of and the need to change to directing his/her whole life to God
3. And what directing his/her whole life toward God has meant to his/her now.

The witness of the speaker's conversion and his/her progressive growth is given throughout the entire Talk. It is important to let the candidates hear that the speaker is an ordinary person, one who lives a life much like their own; someone who works, takes care of

the family and knows how to enjoy their surroundings. The speaker must keep in mind that the concept is not to shock the candidates but to show how any person can turn to God and become "a new person".

The speaker needs to convey to the candidates how God became and continues to become more and more important to them and what it means to live totally for Him, even to the point that he/she would sacrifice worldly things to have a closer union with Him.

This does not mean that the speaker has to talk about a dramatic change, or a big conversion. Directing one's whole life to God is usually a process, and even if it involves a dramatic change at one point in their life, there should be a number of other less dramatic points where the speaker has made significant improvements.

Make sure to point out that a life of piety is to be visible, natural and without exaggerations. While we are not to live the life of a monk, prayer should definitely be part of our daily life.

A life that is geared towards God is not always an easy road, but a road that is worth traveling. To live a life of true piety one must be joyful and courageous.

Overall, the Piety Talk is meant to be delivered with strength. This is not a talk that should be given by an inexperienced speaker.

The Cursillista who is asked to give this talk should have

experienced a personal conversion and needs to be living his/her life for God. The message should be kept simple, direct and to the point – the only adequate response to the gift of grace of God is to totally surrender to Him.