

Canadian Anglican Cursillo

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION



SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AND CURSILLO

Spiritual Direction in the life of a Cursillista helps us persevere in our Fourth Day Journey. Spiritual Direction focuses on relationships – both our relationship with Christ and our relationship with others. The Cursillo Method specifies three complementary ways of tending these relationships - Spiritual Direction, a Fourth Day Reunion Group, and Ultreyas.

Spiritual Direction is having someone who is willing to walk beside us, and to help us to keep going in our faith; someone who will challenge us.

Many people hear the term Spiritual Direction for the first time on a Cursillo weekend. Unfortunately, its meaning is not delineated for us very carefully, and we come away from the three-day weekend hyped up, ready to charge ahead to find a ‘Spiritual Director’ in order to be under ‘Spiritual Direction’.

Most Dioceses nowadays will have a list of people who have been on a course and have qualified as Spiritual Directors and for some people that is a good route to follow. The Spiritual Advisors on a weekend, or the Diocesan Spiritual Director will be able to point you in the right direction.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL DIRECTION?

Spiritual guidance, spiritual advice, soul friendship – these terms go some way towards describing the various facets of the pastoral ministry of Spiritual Direction. It is a process in which one person meets regularly with a competent person in order to seek guidance, reassurance, discernment, and affirmation in developing a deeper, richer relationship with God.

Spiritual Direction is neither counselling nor mentoring. Spiritual Direction is a specialized relationship focused on one’s prayer life and relationship with God. The real Director is the indwelling Holy Spirit who continually invites us to grow in holiness and wholeness. The spiritual director’s role is to enable and assist us to become aware of God’s action in our daily life, so we can respond and continue to grow in intimacy with God.

By inviting another person to share our journey we open a door for the Holy Spirit to work in our lives in a new way. Our spiritual journey becomes less affected by the vagaries of our emotional state and more centred on the action of God in our lives.

IS IT SOMETHING NEW?

Spiritual Direction is almost as old as the Christian Church. When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth Century, large numbers of men and women felt called by God to go and live lives of solitude and discipleship in the desert.

Soon, other people were going into the desert to ask advice of these “Desert Fathers and Mothers” (as they became known). This was the beginning of the practice of seeking and giving Spiritual Direction. This ministry of Spiritual Direction has existed in the life of the Church in various forms since those early days.

As Christians, we are prompted to continually cultivate the “mind of Christ” in our lives. Consequently, the focus of Spiritual Direction is aimed at assisting an individual in cultivating a more mature union with God.

WHO SHOULD SEEK SPIRITUAL DIRECTION?

Anyone who is serious about exploring and developing their relationship with God would benefit from receiving Spiritual Direction:

- You might be going through a desert experience of your own.
- You may feel yourself being drawn to pray in new ways.
- You might be aware of God calling you in some way.
- You long for dedicated time to explore your interior life.

The Spiritual Director’s task is to help you discern and recognize God’s activity in the fabric of your daily life.

CHOOSING A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Choosing a Spiritual Director is a very personal decision. As you seek a director, pray for openness, discernment, and clarity about the type of director you want. Some factors to consider may include:

- Do you want your director to be a female or a male, lay or ordained?
- Does the age of the person matter to you?
- Do you hope for a director who shares an interest in something important to you (e.g. – music, poetry, gardening, painting)?

WHAT HAPPENS IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION?

Spiritual Direction is a faith-sharing process. The one seeking guidance relates what the Lord seems to be doing in their life. After listening carefully to these experiences, the director may offer some enlightenment and encouragement.

- Spiritual direction requires regular meetings of the directee with the director.
- Spiritual direction is a one-to-one relationship.
- Directors should never impose their ideas of spirituality upon the persons they direct.
- Ideally, spiritual direction is a face-to-face encounter.

WHAT'S THE GOAL?

The ultimate goal of Spiritual Direction and growth is for each of us to become who God intends us to be; the person God has in mind when God speaks our name. God guides us in this process of transforming union by three means: revelation, human experience, and prayer. Each one is a way in which God speaks to us. Spiritual Direction enables us to answer the question, "Who am I?" It sets us on the path to becoming that unique person God created each one of us to be.

WHAT QUALITIES SHOULD WE SEEK IN A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR?

- an abounding trust and confidence in God
- a genuine happiness reflective of their interior joy
- prayerfulness
- be under the guidance of a competent spiritual director themselves
- although they may not be formally trained, be somewhat knowledgeable in the areas of theology, scripture, and psychology
- a well-balanced understanding of the spiritual life
- ability to inspire trust and confidence
- willingness to listen carefully and prayerfully
- demonstrates both passion for the faith and compassion for you as you deepen your Fourth Day
- respects and lives confidentiality
- is able to see Christ in themselves and others
- is above all else, someone who is fully alive in Christ!

CONCLUSION

As we journey in our lives as Christians, it is good to seek out the guidance of others along the way. Spiritual Direction is a very important ministry. Consider how your life with God is right now. Consider how your life with God could be. How are God and you going to get there?

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

FURTHER RESOURCES:

- *Beginning Spiritual Direction*, David E. Rosage, Servant Publications: Ann Arbor, Mich., 1994
- *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction*, Margaret Guenther. Cowley Publications: Boston, Mass., 1992.
- [https://www.episcopalcurriculum.org/Spiritual Direction](https://www.episcopalcurriculum.org/Spiritual%20Direction)
- *Spiritual Direction 101: The Basics of Spiritual Guidance*, Teresa Blythe. Apocryphile Press: Berkley, CA, 2018
- *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, William A. Barry, and William J. Connolly. Harper Collins Publishers, New York, NY, 2009
- *Toward Holy Ground: Spiritual Directions for the Second Half of Life*, Margaret Guenther. Cowley Publications: Boston, Mass., 1995