

**Chapter 1 : Seeking God | Spiritual Directors International**

*The feast day of Epiphany enlightens the global human story of spiritual direction—the Magi model how to seek God. Most Epiphany illustrations show three wise men at night, with a brilliant star to guide them.*

Men and women so endowed are true servants of the living tradition of prayer. If the spiritual director has no experience of the spiritual life, he will be incapable of leading into it the souls whom God is calling to it, and he will not even understand them. Three, in order to maintain and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church each of them has sought out spiritual direction. So, what is spiritual direction? What is a spiritual director? Grounded in the truths of the faith once delivered to the saints cf. Through it we grow in our prayer life, and learn to live more fully into and out of our call to holiness in whatever state of life God calls us. What is a Spiritual Director? A spiritual director will usually have some training in the ministry of direction. Sometimes, however, a director is simply a woman or man who has a reputation in the community of faith for being able to offer spiritual insight and counsel when asked to do so. Where have you noticed God in your life since last we met? When have you experienced God as absent from your life since we last met? In what ways has God comforted you in your afflictions or afflicted you in your comfort since we last met? These are typical questions that might be asked and discussed in a spiritual direction session. The frequency of spiritual direction is usually once a month for an hour. Even video conferencing is becoming more common in this technological age. The fee for spiritual direction depends upon the director. Some spiritual directors ask a set fee for their services. It is appropriate to discuss this matter with any prospective spiritual director to be sure that you are in agreement regarding a fee. I would simply remind my reader at this point that if your spiritual director is a person in consecrated life, he or she has taken a vow of evangelical poverty. Monetary gifts or gifts in kind are usually very helpful. Lest someone be concerned about confidentiality, be assured that meetings with a spiritual director are normally held in the strictest of confidence. This rule would likely be abrogated should a directee suggest some form of harm to self or others during a session. In closing, I would like to encourage my reader to consider finding a spiritual director. Avail yourself of this time-tested discipline for growth in Christ. I will also reiterate what I stated at the beginning of this brief article: They were all deeply committed to Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior; they were faithful to His Body the Church, and each had a spiritual director. What else is there?

**Chapter 2 : Seeking Spiritual Direction: How to Grow the Divine Life Within by Thomas Dubay**

*Spiritual direction is not concerned with the general doctrine of spiritual theology, nor with theoretical situations that one may imagine, but with the individual soul placed in concrete circumstances at a given moment or in a given phase of spiritual growth.*

Beg God to give you a spiritual director. But ask God to guide your search. Beware of faulty spirituality. The Catholic Church has all the wisdom a soul could need. But some spiritual directors turn to teachings and practices from other religions and even discard Catholic wisdom, which can be dangerous. I would advise everyone to stay away from such directors. Start with who you know. If you like your parish priests or know other priests in your area, consider asking one of them to be your director. Or, if you know any faithful religious sisters in your area, they might be able to help, too. If your priest is unable to offer spiritual direction, ask him who he knows. Some diocesan websites list directors within the diocese. If your city has a Catholic university or a public university with a Catholic student center, its website might list people who are able to give spiritual direction to students and therefore, depending on their schedules, those outside the university, too. This can help weed out directors who might give you less-than-orthodox spiritual guidance. Ask them, in person or via email, about their own prayer life or about their favorite devotions. If they are a lay person, ask them where their training came from and do your research on the place that formed them. A former mentor of mine said that one good question to ask is about their relationship with Mary. I think orthodoxy should be the top consideration when looking for a director. Finding a spiritual director is like finding a therapist or a doctor. That said, be aware of the growing pains that can come with having a new director. It might take more than a meeting or two to feel at ease with a new director. That was the case for me. One thing I did to alleviate this was to ask him some small-talk, get-to-know-you questions at the start or conclusion of our sessions. Before long we were laughing and joking with each other at our meetings. Now I feel I can talk to him without much difficulty. If your first session goes well, show initiative and interest by requesting another meeting. Pray how they want you to pray. If they give book recommendations, read them. Be honest and open with them. Your director is hopefully wiser than you. Take their guidance to heart! Compensation and Spiritual Direction In my experience, most priests and religious do not ask for compensation for spiritual direction. Give after every session, or give a set amount every few sessions. If your director is a religious priest, brother, or sister, any stipend you offer them will likely go to their community because of their vows of poverty. Most priests and religious that I know also appreciate gifts of coffee, snacks, beer, and wine! A spiritual bouquet offering to pray a novena or a certain number of Rosaries or a certain number of Masses for your director is also a thoughtful gift. May God bless you and reward you in your search for a spiritual director! Do you have a spiritual director? What advice would you add to the above? She is now a parish administrative assistant in southern Wisconsin. You can find out more about her here. This post contains affiliate links. If you make a purchase by clicking through one of these links, Blessed is She will receive a small percentage of your purchase at no additional cost to you. Thank you for supporting this ministry by using our affiliate links!

*I don't think I'd seek out a spiritual director, since God is my spiritual director. (I hope I don't sound confrontational; that is definitely not my intent. Just giving my perspective).*

Even lay people who have some formal training in theology do not, by virtue of that fact, have the requisite qualities necessary to be spiritual directors. As you might imagine, problems and misunderstandings ensued. Eventually, at least here in the U. After all, upwards of three generations of Catholics nowadays are, by and large, woefully under-catechized in the doctrinal and spiritual teachings of the Catholic Faith. By all means, Catholic lay people should strive to offer good counsel and spiritual advice when the need and opportunity arises. But counselling and spiritual direction are not the same thing. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. She states that a good spiritual director should be learned, prudent, and experienced. John of the Cross also maintains that a director should be learned, prudent, and experienced, and he places great emphasis on experience. The learning of a spiritual director should be extensive. In addition to having a profound knowledge of dogmatic theology, without which he would be exposed to error in regard to matters of faith, and of moral theology, without which he could not even fulfill the office of confessor, the spiritual director should have a thorough knowledge of ascetical and mystical theology. He should know, for example, the theological doctrine concerning Christian perfection, especially regarding such questions as the essence of perfection, the obligation to strive for perfection, the obstacles to perfection, the types of purgation, and the means of positive growth in virtue. He should have a detailed knowledge of the grades of prayer, the trials God usually sends to souls as they advance from the lower to the higher degrees of prayer, and the illusions and assaults of the devil that souls may encounter. He also needs to be well versed in psychology so that he will have an understanding of various temperaments and characters, the influences to which the human personality is subjected, and the function of the emotions in the life of the individual. He should also know at least the basic principles of abnormal psychology and psychiatry so that he will be able to recognize mental unbalance and nervous or emotional disorders. A priest should realize that, if he is not competent to direct a particular soul, he should advise the individual to go to someone who possesses the necessary knowledge. A priest incurs a grave responsibility before God if he attempts to direct a soul when he lacks sufficient knowledge. If he suspects that a penitent is suffering from a mental illness, he should direct that individual to a professional psychiatrist, just as readily as he would expect a psychiatrist to refer spiritual problems to a clergyman. This is one of the most important qualities for a spiritual director. It comprises three basic factors: If a spiritual director lacks prudence, he is usually lacking several other virtues as well. Prudence enables an individual to do the right thing under given circumstances. Spiritual direction is not concerned with the general doctrine of spiritual theology, nor with theoretical situations that one may imagine, but with the individual soul placed in concrete circumstances at a given moment or in a given phase of spiritual growth. The director is not called upon to make decisions regarding general doctrine; most people could find such answers in any standard manual of spiritual theology. In order that the advice be prudent, a spiritual director must have the empathy by which he is able to place himself in the given circumstances and must have the patience to listen attentively. Of the various factors that militate against prudence, the following are especially common: The second characteristic of prudence in the spiritual director is clarity in the advice given to the one directed and in the norms of conduct prescribed. In order that he may be clear in his direction, he must. In speaking to the soul he is directing, he should avoid any vague or indecisive language, but should always express himself in concrete and definite terms. He should resolve problems with a yes or a no and, if necessary, he should take the time for further deliberation before making his decision. If a soul perceives that the director is not sure of himself, it will lose confidence in him, and his direction will lose all its efficacy. Moreover, the director should always be sincere and frank, without any partiality or selfish motives. It would be a serious fault if a director were to avoid offending the person directed lest that person should go to some other priest for direction. Those priests who place great importance in attracting and retaining a large number of followers are, by that very fact, disposing themselves to failure as spiritual directors. The director should

never forget that he acts in the name of the Holy Spirit in directing souls, and that he must endeavor to treat those souls with kindness and- understanding, but with firmness and utter frankness. The director must also take care that he does not become the one who is directed. For that reason, once the director is certain of his decision and the course that should be followed; he should state his mind with unyielding firmness. The individual must be convinced that there are only two alternatives: But the director should not forget that he should never demand of a soul anything that is incompatible with its state of life or vocation, its strength, or present condition. He should realize that there are some things that can be demanded of advanced souls but could never be required of beginners; that some things would be perfectly fitting in dealing with a priest or religious but not with a lay person. Excessive rigor does nothing but frighten souls and may cause them to abandon the road to perfection. There is, therefore, a world of difference between firmness in demanding obedience and an excessive rigidity that discourages the soul of the penitent. This is one of the most precious qualities of a good spiritual director. Even if he is less perfect in knowledge and somewhat deficient in prudence, experience can make up for these deficiencies. This does not mean that the experience of the director must necessarily flow from his own spiritual life, for he may obtain the benefits of experience from his observation and direction of others. As regards the personal experience of the director, if it is a question of the guidance of the average Christian, he needs little more than the experience any priest can obtain from the faithful fulfillment of his duties in the sacred ministry. If it is a question of advanced souls who have already entered the mystical stages of the spiritual life, it is desirable that the priest himself have some experience of those higher stages. If he lacks this, a delicate sense of prudence, coupled with competent knowledge of the mystical states, will suffice in the majority of cases. But personal experience alone is not sufficient to make a spiritual director as competent as he ought to be. There are many different paths by which the Holy Spirit can lead souls to the summit of sanctity. It would be a serious mistake for a director to attempt to lead all souls along the same path and to impose on them his own personal experiences, however beneficial they may have been for himself. The spiritual director should never forget that he is merely an instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit and that his work must be entirely subjected to the Holy Spirit. If, through a lack of understanding of the variety of divine gifts and the multiplicity of roads to perfection, he were to force all souls to travel by the same road, he would become a veritable obstacle to the workings of grace in the soul. Moral Qualities of a Spiritual Director.

**Chapter 4 : Seeking Spiritual Direction Quotes by Thomas Dubay**

*Honors contemplative connection: Directors seek to connect others with the deepest of truths; to support the spiritual transformation of self, others and the world; to embrace holism by integrating mind, body, will and spirit.*

This is a reblog of an article by Lou Kavar. I thought it to be very informative and worth sharing. It refers to a practice in which one person tends to another as a companion for the spiritual journey. At best, an experienced spiritual director may make some observations about what form life is taking for the other. Conveying the dynamic of this process seems to elude all of these terms. But the actual process is found in every great religious tradition. My understanding of the practice of spiritual direction is rooted in the Eastern Christian tradition. In the Eastern Christian tradition, spiritual direction traces its origin to the third century of the Common Era. At that time, the fathers and mothers of the Christian contemplative tradition sought refuge and quiet in the Sinai desert. From them emerged an understanding of what we today call spiritual director. The person regarded as a father or mother, abba or imma, was a person known for living a well integrated spiritual life. Others would seek out the wisdom of the father or mother. More often in small groups, but sometimes individually, the father or mother would offer perspective about the path of the spiritual journey. This process was understood to be one of healing. Unlike many other approaches to spiritual direction common today, spiritual direction in Eastern Christianity is primarily known as the healing of the soul. Affirming that each person is at heart the image and likeness of the Divine, soul healing is meant to remove all obstacles that prevent the person from living fully in consonance with the Divine spark that animates each of us. Spiritual practices and disciplines do have merit in that they enable us to live into the truth of the inner light we carry. But the process of healing, of returning to wholeness, is the focus of spiritual direction. Healing and wholeness are the result of turning toward and reorienting ourselves to God: In this process, every aspect of life is refocused to enable us to manifest the Divine light, to be transfigured into the image of God we were created to be. Healing is a movement toward integration from all the ways we each lead lives that are imbalanced or off-target. When I meet with others as a spiritual director, either in my study or by way of Skype, any aspect of life may be part of the conversation. For example, some people explore how the spiritual direction of life can be better integrated with work and career while others explore living compassionately in our complex world. In these conversations, my role is not that of a counselor or psychologist who identifies problems and establishes goals to solve those problems. While some are Christian, some are Buddhist, and others describe themselves as spiritual but not religious or humanist. The metaphors for the integration of the spiritual dimension of life with the other aspects of life may differ because of our beliefs and practices. Yet, the essential process of healing the soul, of journeying with another along the process of wholeness, is very much the same. Some follow a particular approach to prayer and spiritual practice, like the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, and others use psycho-spiritual tools, like the Enneagram. My approach is one of integration and is rooted in the tradition that understands spiritual growth and development as a process of healing and wholeness for all of life.

**Chapter 5 : Important qualities to look for in a spiritual director**

*As God normally prefers to work through secondary causes, right from apostolic times the practice arose of seeking personal spiritual direction from a wise and prudent person who could guide one along the path to holiness with all its twists and turns.*

Thursday, January 5, - 7: Three wise seekers follow a star; they travel with spiritual companions. They do not know quite what they are searching for. They trust the journey. The feast day of Epiphany enlightens the global human story of spiritual direction—the Magi model how to seek God. Most Epiphany illustrations show three wise men at night, with a brilliant star to guide them. Tissot invites us to experience their journey in the harsh daytime heat of the desert. Look into the faces of the people in the Tissot painting. What questions do the seekers invoke that may be helpful in your new year of spiritual direction? Here are some questions to ponder: How did the three wise men recognize God in the baby they found in Bethlehem? Who are all the people on camels and on foot following for miles through barren terrain? During the stark, rocky, daylight hours, with no visible star to guide them, what spiritual practices helped this community get along? These questions are great spiritual direction discernments for today. Epiphany has its roots in the Greek verb *epiphaneia*, "to appear," and also means "appearance" or "manifestation. Staring at the painting, you may have an epiphany: Imagine the three Magi are traveling through time, with us among the followers in the long human tradition of seeking God. The Magi recognized God in their midst and celebrated their discovery by reverencing the Christ with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Seeking and finding God changed everything. Around the world and across traditions, seeking and finding God is changing everything. Can you see it? Reflection How do you recognize God in your midst? How is spiritual direction changing you and the people with whom you companion? Share your stories here.

**Chapter 6 : Purchase | Navigating the Interior Life**

*Spiritual direction is meeting with a trained and experienced director to reflect on how God is present and active in your life right now, and how God might be calling you into deeper relationship. God is the Director; the human director serves as the vessel through which the Spirit works to uncover and discover the Divine at work in your.*

How can you build your soul without help and guidance? Open up the yellow pages of your local phone directory. There you will find listed attorneys, financial advisors, plumbers, electricians, beauticians, bankers, and even fitness trainers. All of these people know much more about their business than we do. Therefore we pay them a fee to help us in their particular specialty. Some of them become regular consultants and a few even good friends. All of their expert advice is directed towards help in this present life. In addition, you will find dozens of people listed as psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists and so on. Although these health professionals can perform a useful function, often times they serve as surrogate spiritual directors, giving erroneous or unfortunate answers for spiritual problems. Their advice depends on their particular training often based on naturalistic theories or ideologies which can do much more harm than good. The only question truly worth asking is that of the rich young man of the Gospel, "What must I do to gain eternal life? We can then look at our present state in life and our past life experiences for good clues as to what God wants for us in any present moment. However, in order to find answers to these questions, every Catholic should have a spiritual director. How can you ever hope, without a director, to build the castle of your sanctification in order to live forever in heaven? Escriva goes on to say, "You think you are really somebody: Precisely because of all of this, you -- more than others -- need a director for your soul. He will provide you the answer to your many questions as our circumstances change and as we grow "in wisdom and grace. Each person is a unique child of God with his particular genetic code, temperament, and life experiences. God has a specific plan for each. To discern this particular plan should be the continuing goal of any serious Christian. As God normally prefers to work through secondary causes, there arose right from apostolic times, the practice of seeking personal spiritual direction from a wise and prudent person who could guide one along the path to holiness with all its unexpected twists and turns. One would search with great difficulty throughout history to find canonized saints who did not receive regular spiritual direction. After all, even our Blessed Mother, the Immaculate Conception herself, found her vocation through the words of the Archangel Gabriel. And even she asked how this might come about. Where do you search for a spiritual director? We should do what is referred to on Wall Street as "due diligence. After all, you are looking for a person to whom you are, in part, at least entrusting the salvation and sanctification of your very immortal soul. Remember that you are the buyer and that it may take several tries to find the right person or organization that fits your needs. The spiritual director may be a priest or a layperson. One very simple way is to look to your friends who clearly take their interior and apostolic life seriously. One flows from the other. Ask them for a referral. If you see a serious striving for holiness in them, there is little doubt they are taking advantage of a good spiritual director. He need not have formal training in spiritual direction. The traits listed above more than make up for class hours or a degree. Then try to get him to free some time up for you. I guarantee he has a long line of clients.

**Chapter 7 : Sallie H. Gentry**

*As Carmelites We live our life of allegiance to Jesus Christ and to serve Him faithfully with a pure heart and a clear conscience through a commitment to seek the face of the living God (the contemplative dimension of life), through prayer, through fraternity, and through service (diakonia).*

This is a holistic and integrated formation that takes into account three related and interconnected dimensions: Beginning this church ministry of spiritual direction implies commitment for continuing formation. Within all professions and ministries of the helping relationship medical, social service, teaching, catechism, community animator, etc. The possibility of renewed formation is also, eventually, an opportunity of continual renewed growth! In fact, without an ongoing formation, we have no right to continue spiritually directing others in their journeys of following Christ more closely. Embracing the experience of being directed Having had and continuing to have quality spiritual direction is fundamental, for these experiences will always serve as important and valid points of reference. Whether helpful or not, as points of reference, our experiences attitudes, judgments, advise, conduct, etc. Those persons who have directed me well in my life and have helped me to grow, plus those who have intended to be good spiritual directors to me but were not “including some who have even harmed me” all remain engraved in my memory. They are there in my most basic of emotions, such as fright, pain, anger, shame, happiness, my attitudes and values, and truly influence the way and quality in which I relate to others. These experiences may also play a role in how I help other people. The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: Praying with the exercises for eight days or more in a personalized manner is very beneficial, and if possible the 30 day retreat or the 19th annotation retreat over several months is even better. The month long retreat as spelled out by St. Ignatius, in content and in experience, ends up becoming a paradigm of life. The meditations and the prayer periods of the Spiritual Exercises bring to life the different internal experiences of each retreatant. I know little other pedagogy more effective in the formation of spiritual directors. In a word, the best training of a spiritual director “the deepest and lasting” is his or her own experience of being directed by experienced people of God. Discovering it, learning to articulate it to self and to others, and to discern in the Lord. This is how one goes about discovering and forming a personalized style and charisma in the ministry of accompanying others. Having the human stratum subiectum and charisma in Spiritual Accompaniment. Spiritual direction is not simply a learned task; good will and pure intentions do not suffice. One must be mature both in the human and spiritual senses. If this is the case, a spiritual director is then able to listen “even with intuition, deeply empathizes, understands emotions and recognizes spiritual movements of the one sharing his or her story. These are just some of the skills that begin to unfold over time through contemplation and not without faith. Charisma is a gift, a Christian quality that one shares with the other members of his or her community. It is a special grace from God manifested in someone as a service to be shared within a community. As such, the charisma to be able to accompany others in their spiritual journey is recognized, then, by those who ask for help and seek direction, orientation and support. In a way, it is through others that we discover our gifts as spiritual directors: This recognition by our brothers and sisters in faith then invites, encourages and confirms the gifts of spiritual direction in another. At the same time, the one who is graced with the charisma to accompany others in their journey experiences the desire, joy and psychological-spiritual integration as experienced in the same Christian commitment. Self knowledge is even crucial for giving good spiritual direction. All of the mystics, from John of the Cross to Teresa of Avila and Ignatius of Loyola, insist upon this, and with reason. The dessert fathers, masters in spirituality from the first centuries, also emphasize this, to pay attention to the behavior and tendencies, including temptations, of each individual. We must all learn, as spiritual directors, how to develop and integrate this approach. In doing so, it is then possible to get at the roots of the obstacles for growth in the spirit. In the spiritual life a more personalized self-knowledge helps us to avoid self deception and allows us to be transformed by God “and not by our own efforts” toward a more genuine image of ourselves and our relationship with God, to not project and to better discern that which is or is not from God. Any hint of co-dependency, competition, emotional transference, or the desire to satisfy

unmet needs, must be recognized and taken into account as best as possible. A shallow Self-awareness or even a vague knowledge of the true self simply does not suffice, no matter how healthy a person is. Rather, we need the help of others, and through adequate measures we are able to deepen our self-awareness, thus illuminating those dark corners, discovering the typical pit-falls, and empowering our own strong points. In fact, all the dynamics in a helping relationship are present in spiritual direction. The experience of age through the different stages in life and our own human and spiritual growth really determine the guidelines for a fuller self knowledge and personal integration. Managing basic psychological factors The social sciences, psychology in particular, have a lot to contribute to spiritual direction. Even more, a spiritual director working on being more sensitive and taking seriously anyone who may ask for guidance should not take for granted some of the basic elements of psychology – which in our day is more accessible and easier to understand. Without a doubt, a clearer knowledge of the psychological development of the human being is a necessary tool towards a better understanding of those whom we help. Grace works through nature and the religious – psychological development that occurs throughout the life of a human being becomes clearer and builds itself upon the biological, psychological and social stages we experience in life. It is very different to spiritually guide an 18 year old person than a 35 year old or a 50 year old, for whatever may seem as common sense should be informed by the psychological studies available to us today as useful and indispensable tools for our ministry. In addition, another important area of study is of the psychology of personality. How do I perceive myself? How do I relate to others? What are the predominant tendencies in my behavior? How do I make decisions? How do I handle frustration? How do I love and let myself be loved? To live in the Spirit is to live life – and all the facets of life – in God. No personality type is independent from the quality and the way in which we relate to others and to God. The psychology of personality, far from limiting or labeling our directees, allows for growth and openness no matter who the individual is; it helps getting down to earth what the Holy Spirit inspires throughout life and dismisses that which tends to threaten and squelch the ways God speaks to us. Also, we can build upon and round out our on-going formation by incorporating communication psychology and the psychology of religion. Spiritual direction should not be reduced to counseling or, even more, a psychological therapy. Nevertheless, these areas of psychology can contribute immensely to our ministry of direction. And central to guiding someone in the spiritual life is being able to distinguish between the different approaches and professions involved in serving others so as to do justice to each different ministry and to be able to fully assume the specific task of spiritual direction. Given this, however, we must not take for granted how much insight human psychology offers us today. Being able to integrate the different theoretical elements, attitudes and psychological tools without merely psychologizing, and at the same time doing spiritual direction without merely spiritualizing, is and in of itself an art, a gift from God. Being able up-to-date and in touch with social reality and cultural trends Neither those who seek guidance nor those who are spiritual directors live in an isolated, ahistorical context. Wanting to well situate a directee in his or her own social context requires us to be in touch with the world around us and the social and cultural realities of our time. Faith, spiritual growth and apostolic commitment occur within a specific historical context and in a determined culture. Thus, it is not only important but imperative that someone being trained in spiritual direction to individuals, couples and families, be very aware of new social trends that form the values and judgments of today – like doing a sort of social analysis. Even more, growing in the ability to identify with Christ as a goal in spiritual direction opens the believer to a richer and more committed faith life: More closely following Christ naturally leads to a fuller commitment to justice and a compassion for the poor and the marginalized of the world. It is the gospel criteria for determining the fruits of a Christian lifestyle. The historic dimension together with the Christian commitment it implies is an essential element to good spiritual direction. Developing themes of spiritual theology Spiritual theology is a vast reserve of wisdom for those who give spiritual direction. This is an area rich in theological reflection: The spiritual life and following Christ become enriched by these areas of reflection upon: One important realm of spiritual theology includes everything under the umbrella of Christian prayer: The Sacraments, channels of communication with God and experiences of grace, in particular the Eucharist, as a source of Christian life, is another chapter of spiritual theology that requires familiarity on behalf of the spiritual companion. Knowing how to distinguish between

spiritual direction and the sacrament of Reconciliation and relating the two together can be a tremendous help for those being directed. All people have their unique calling and path in life, but similar spiritual movements can be seen in different people – creating a sort of pedagogical paradigm. Knowing the annotations and rules for discerning the Spirit from the Spiritual Exercises, of St. Ignatius helps immensely in being able to perceive the different movements of the Spirit – and thus, discern them. Subtlety is a gift of the Spirit that both enriches and empowers clear and more genuine discernment. Spiritual theology, then, broadens our spiritual direction by giving us more tools to work with – in addition to security and confidence. Similarly, being able to understand and articulate the different spiritualities that have contributed to the Church as incarnate in the lives of men and women saints widens our perspective and allows for better discernment of how God speaks to specific individuals. We must also remember, finally, the mystical experience in a well developed spirituality, both mature and healthy, with its own criteria. Participating in workshops for continuing formation One would think that after a personal experience of being directed, after reading about and studying theology and the social sciences – such as psychology, the only missing piece in becoming active in this ministry, then, would be requests from others for spiritual direction. This is true, but not the whole truth. Effectively, in practice this ministry requires that everything learned be processed and personalized at more depth by participating in classes and specialized workshops. Good theology is not enough to be a good spiritual director. This apostolic ministry is a unique service to others that requires apprenticeship and a lot of feed back from other good spiritual directors. This is an important point for both beginners at spiritual direction as well as for those already with some experience. For those beginning, a program of apprenticeship and a directed process of growth is a good approach. A few suggestions for those preceding down a path of spiritual direction as – an apostolic ministry: The profile of a spiritual director in the light of Jesus; human and spiritual maturity of the spiritual guide. Case studies, sharing experiences, recognition or different styles and approaches of directors, support and new challenges, mutual feedback, etc. My formation as a spiritual director – personal log: Experience having spiritual direction 2. Good self knowledge and awareness 4. Able to articulate the basics of psychology 5. Study areas and themes of spiritual theology 7. Spiritual direction workshops for beginners and veterans in the field See also.

**Chapter 8 : What to Look for in a Catholic Spiritual Director - Beliefnet**

*"There has been a growing hunger among evangelicals for the sort of spiritual direction the Jesuits have been doing for centuries, but little guidance for those who would seek to give or receive such direction.*

In fact, many if not most of the major spiritual lessons I learned last year were the direct result of conversations with my spiritual director. I contacted the religious brother in charge of spiritual direction for our diocese and asked him some questions that might be helpful to anyone considering getting a spiritual director: How do you find a spiritual director? It is highly recommended to find someone who has received formal training in this area I believe most of them go through a two-year program. Also, if you happen to live near a place that offers spiritual retreats many monasteries do, and some diocese have their own retreat houses there would almost certainly be a spiritual director there. Christians of any denomination are welcome to get in touch with Catholic spiritual directors; it would be up to the individuals involved to discern if they felt like it would be a good fit. I did have to meet with more than one person before I found someone who was a good fit. Do they charge a fee? How often do you meet with them? I try to meet with mine once a month. How can those of us with lots of little ones make it happen? Or, depending on the ages of your children and the location you meet, you may even be able to bring them. Also, you may want to consider just telling the spiritual director you contact your problem with finding childcare and asking him or her for suggestions. They might be able to work with you to meet at a time and place that would work within your constraints. I strongly encourage you not to let a lack of childcare dissuade you from seeking a spiritual director. Again, I think that it is often we busy moms who could most benefit from regular spiritual direction. What do you talk to a spiritual director about? To give you some real-world examples, some questions I might ask my spiritual director would be: Is there anything I can do about it? How can I overcome that and better trust in God? How can I better discern what God is telling me in that area of my life? That was a big mental block I had to overcome. Then I was bound and determined that I wanted a priest or a religious brother or sister as a spiritual director. But then something nagged at me about it, and I decided to just set up one meeting to see how it went. As it turns out, she could not have been a better fit for me, and I am thrilled to have her as my spiritual director. So to summarize the lessons I learned from my own experience: I hope that helps!

## Chapter 9 : Spiritual Direction and Healing the Soul

*The Cenacle Retreat House offers a three-year ecumenical formation program for Spiritual Directors/Companions designed for those who want to acquire the skills to develop a framework of understanding and a competency in fostering spiritual growth in others.*

Hardcover Verified Purchase In the course of life, we all seek out a licensed physician to address acute physical needs, or chronic conditions that plague our desired quality of life. To do otherwise, would invite the oft painful or potentially fatal consequences. Few would neglect the physical needs of the body. However, it is equally important to recognize the spiritual aspects of human life. Broadly speaking, discussion around personality, soul, and psyche are all aspects of the spiritual self. Yet, when is the last time that you went to a Spiritual Director for soul care? Is it any less important? Consider the individual who is a superb physical specimen - in perfect health, but has lost hope altogether. Clearly, there are countless many that are physically healthy, but spiritually shipwrecked. Tragically, many who find themselves in this condition are unable to face another day and choose to escape the incessant pain with a preemptive shot to the head. Interestingly enough, there is increased interest in the realm of the spiritual in our culture today. What we desperately need are physicians of the soul. Spiritual Direction is an engaging look into this whole matter of life in the spiritual realm. Questions like, "Who am I? Informally, this relationship becomes a spiritual friendship, or what is commonly understood as a soul friend. Nouwen would define this friendship as, " Human vulnerability is a key area of discovery in an effective SD relationship where someone comes alongside another in their restless search for meaning or direction. The SD does not necessarily know the particular answers, but is willing and able to assist in the search. As a spiritual director, although at times weak and limited, Nouwen would argue this relationship conveys, " Where there is charity and love, God is there. The Bible is clear in stating that, "there is wisdom in the council of many. He is the master sculptor at work. To submit to Him is to be open to what He is doing, even if the process brings discomfort. It is not uncommon for a family physician to prescribe treatment that is uncomfortable, painful, or inconvenient. Again, should any less be granted to our Heavenly Father for His purposes? As a loving Father, He can be trusted. The ability to listen to God is critical in making sense of our spiritual lives and His perfect will for us. A willingness to respond in obedience is another dimension altogether in living the Christian life successfully. The role of a SD continually walks alongside his directee in times of compulsiveness and helps identify potentially false approaches or temptations in finding satisfaction in life. False hope is lurking and marketed all about us. The voices clamor from the hilltops of social media, "read this book! At these times, Nouwen invites the would be victim to return to the open and accepting arms of His God. That I am always searching for God, always struggling to discover the fullness of Love, and always yearning for the complete truth, tells me that I have already been given a taste of God, of Love, and of Truth. I can only look for something that I have, to some degree, already found. He state, "Community is not some sentimental ideal place or time where everybody lives together, loves each other, and always gets along At the same time, this is not to be viewed as a substitute for a meaningful relationship with God. Nouwen argues, "Community is solitude greeting solitude," but beloved of God, nonetheless. In closing, a powerful idea that Nouwen brings to bear in his experience hinges upon the concept of forgiveness. When asked, Nouwen states that forgiveness, " This is a rather profound consideration based upon the implications of our relationship with God. The impact of this book upon me has been immeasurable and continues to burn in my soul. Not only am I in pursuit of a SD such as Nouwen now deceased , but I aspire to be this type of person - a physician of the soul. One who sees himself as a "wounded healer who looks after our own wounds and at the same time prepares to heal the wounds of others.