

SD Training Notes

December 11 & 12, 2015

FRIDAY NIGHT

Opening Prayer

Sharing - "Spiritual Check-in" by each person (not recorded)

How's life in general?

Joys and Problems/struggles

Spiritual life during the past month

Recommendation/Reminder - Examen (twice a day suggested)

not like an examination of conscience

a means to "gauge" the day

Ignatius felt the Examen should never be omitted

A structure for lectio divina

Read

Meditate

Dialogue with Jesus

Contemplation

Montserrat Prayer book (stained glass window picture on front) has good Examen format

*book by Mark Link: "Praying the Way Jesus Prayed"

"I don't feel like I know Jesus (the man) very well."

What was he like?

What was his personality?

would like him to be my friend

would like to know him better

*book by Matthew Kelly: "Rediscovering Jesus"

Relationship with God is one of the "bedrocks" of SD

It takes time to add a new discipline to your life.

Dossier - Was it useful? Did you learn anything?

Responses not recorded

Dossier helps people see what their image of God is

Image of God as "father" may not be good (eg in an abusive household as a child)

SD ought to have contact numbers for psychologists, counselors, etc, for when a person needs more than an SD can give.

Please work with dossier, pray with it, use it with those seeking direction, to help them see where God is in their lives.

“Different Ways of Praying” - Fr. Tetlow “Brief Notes” p. 150-152 of “Choosing Christ in Everyday Life”

One way is not “better” than another.

Our prayer life changes over time.

Praying with Fantasy

begins with placing ourselves and being aware that we are in God’s presence

Ask God for what you want.

Ask to know Jesus better.

connect fantasy with the way each of us reflects God’s knowing and loving back to God

What does it say about my relationship with God?

point of fantasy is for God to be in control, not the pray-er.

Prayer of Consideration

Jesus prayed this way.

will and intellect are engaged, questions come to you

eg lilies in the field

Why are they here? How do they grow? Why are they that color? etc.

eg “me”

Why in Longview? What did I grow up with? What matters to me, and why? etc.

Steps: Begin by being aware of God’s presence

Ask questions (who, what, when, why, how)

can consider one of Jesus’ parables eg the prodigal son

Meditation and Contemplation

take a Bible passage
understand you are in God’s presence
understand about to pray about a real event
compose self in that place
ask God what you want
enter the scene
see it like through a camera lens, as a
spectator

One type is pure gift of God, when we are able to rest
in God’s presence
for Ignatius:
not a spectator, but a character in the event
eg Nativity: could be shepherd, Joseph, etc
actively engaged in what is going on

However you engage in prayer, follow with dialogue with Jesus or God or Mary, etc.

Anxiety, peace, disquiet, fear, confusion, etc can appear in prayer time. Name it, choose how to act in response to the feeling.

Try these ways to pray - engage in mental prayer.

Important: dedication to a place and time for prayer (no matter how “successful” - or not - you may be)

Contemplation Exercise - The Nativity

Case studies (discussion)

Note: often what people say they want to meet about, is not really what they want to meet about.

SATURDAY MORNING

Recap from last night

Forms of prayer

encouraged to engage in mental prayer at some times

As ministers, we need to foster our own prayer lives and relationships with God

Tyler Spiritual Companionship cases (handout dated April 12)

- was prelude to today’s discussion

Today - more on first two rules

- listening

- worldviews (intro to January session)

- case studies (in triads)

discernments

listening

Case 4 from handout (Brenda)

potential issue with male director (she is vulnerable - as are all, including self)

okay to talk about prayer, including prayer in relationship to discernment

Same sex vs different sex directors?

awareness of boundaries and potential difficulties

“Theology of Desiring” = people’s worldview

“(noble) humanism”

okay to do noble and good things just because they are noble and good



addressed in the Scriptures by Paul: “I have seen how scrupulous you are in all religious matters”

Be aware that some “noble humanists” will find God, but some never will.

Job of SD is to listen and help person discern what kind of spirit is motivating them.

Spirits of the flesh (*see Paul’s list - the “enemy” or “bad spirits” of our human nature, along with Satan and demons) are prevalent in today’s culture. We need to be aware of those spirits of the flesh and spirits of the dark. There are people who embody this particular worldview.

We want to be in the spirit of Christ’s life.

SD is to help see which spirits are working in the directee’s life.

“Some Situations with the Spirits” (handout)

1. Mother Teresa
 - a. Was she moved by a good spirit?
 - b. Was persecution a sign that she was growing in her spiritual life?
 - i. She was doing God’s work
 - ii. She was sure she was doing God’s will (= great consolation)
 - iii. She went through proper channels to begin her work
2. Rebecca
 - a. Holy Spirit would not tell her to stop praying altogether
 - b. Good spirit would have led her to want to pray better
 - c. Evil spirit plants doubts in your mind
 - d. NOTE the Holy Spirit never tells you that you are not good enough
3. Brenda
 - a. Week 1: “mystery of sin” meditations (sin and how I cooperate with it)
 - b. Forgiveness would be issue for SD to address

Discernment of Spirits (Review)

Process of distinction between two things

Spirits - things to be discerned

Discerning affective stirring of heart

Joy, Hope, Fear, Sadness, Anxiety, lack of hope, peace, discouragement, etc

involves conclusion or action

“Which of these are of God, and which are not?”

Rules of Discernment based on a person’s experience

Ultimately, we want to accept good and reject evil.

As SDs, we want to help others do this.

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Director2. Directee3. Listener |
|---|

Process of
Discernment

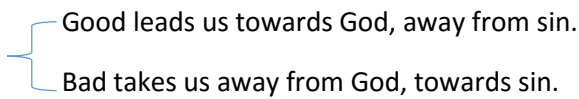
-
- Awareness of spirits working, notice what is stirring
 - Understanding (identify, name, understand where they come from)
 - Action: accept what comes from God and reject what does not

Important to ask:

1. What is leading me towards God?
2. What is leading me away from God?

Discernment is important in considering movements in our lives, as they affect our lives of faith, hope, and love.

Ignatius: two
fundamental movements



The enemy will try everything to hinder progress towards God. When a person is engaged in sin, the enemy will make them “feel good”. In this case, the good spirit will “prick the conscience”.

Case Study: Dwight

Note interplay of how spirits are motivating Dwight

A trust has been violated because he did not tell the SD about the second woman.

LUNCH

Be careful with the use of terms like “desolation” and “consolation” (also “depression”). There are times when “the bad spirit comes disguised as an angel of light”.

Listening

Be careful not to distract by doing things like fiddling with keys, passing judgment by facial expressions and movements.

When is it appropriate for SD to speak?

To help directee clarify - lets them “think” for a moment

“Echoing” is often used in active listening

keeps director and directee clear in conversation

gives directee opportunity to think

There are times when a challenge should be made

hold up “comparison” (eg two statements or statement & action)

ask for additional information (more detail)

confrontation with “hard truth”

Asking to repeat statement can be appropriate

Ask person how they feel about what they said

non-judgmental

non-confrontational

Feedback

listener doesn't have to give this

has a function (for SD is not the goal, or to set tone of conversation)

can help directee get where they need to go

could take form of instruction (eg teaching them to pray)

to give a recommendation

direct guidance (eg prayer, not for moral issues)

the briefer the feedback, the more likely it will be heard

Describe what you heard, don't judge/rate/evaluate (be concrete, specific)

Focus is always on the person sharing

learn to differentiate non-verbal signs

restate/paraphrase

use analogies

consider (describe) observed behaviors

ask open-ended questions

TRIADS - ROLE PLAY

Consensus is that role play is helpful.

We should ask ourselves: "How can we help facilitate building the directee's relationship with God?"

Barry & Connolly p.44: re: spiritual direction "is primarily concerned with helping individuals freely to place themselves before God" (Ignatius uses phrase "active indifference")

This is a detachment from the individual's outcome.

We need to accept those things that help us in our relationship with God, and reject those that hinder us.

Note "detachment" doesn't mean that you don't care.

p.43: Teaching, preaching, and moral guidance are not the proper task of SDs

p.61 (or 63): The primacy of this task of non-interfering facilitation is easy enough to understand when the contemplative attitude is sufficiently developed to be recognized.

**Note - did not look at chapter 5*

Homework: Write two cases, fashioned around Rules 1 & 2.