

Spiritual Director Training notes
January 14, 2017

Opening Prayer: "Take, Lord, Receive"

Spiritual Check-In

"don't like to admit my faults"

- What does Ignatius say about this? (see Rule 13)

If director is not "in a good place", may prefer to cancel appts with their directees

Silence should be filled by the directee

- for director, takes time, patience, practice

Director should not "take on" problems of directee

- "do not step into their chaos"

Director should pray before and after sessions

- for self, for directee

BREAK

Barry & Connolly

Chapter 7: Criteria for evaluating religious experience

p111 - "Attention to the quality of the dialogue with the Lord helps us discern where we may be blinding ourselves to the light in our lives"

What criteria do we use to evaluate whether this is a religious experience?

p109 - "Not all experiences, even those that seem highly religious, are from God."

Role Play - Gerry and Catherine

The director's purpose is to help foster the relationship of the directee with God.

Examen - purpose is to see where God is, in our daily lives.

- acknowledgement that God is involved in every aspect of our lives

LUNCH

Case Study: Maria

Case Study: Diane

Barry & Connolly

p138/139 - "Christian spiritual directors universally recommend the Bible as a source of personal prayer. We believe that the best way (not the only way) to use Scripture for prayer is to

take it as much as possible on its own terms, that is, understanding the various books and passages as they were originally intended to be understood. Thus, spiritual directors ought to have enough understanding of modern scriptural studies to be able to help directees hear the word of God in a relatively informed way.”

p128 - “The primary basis for the trust placed in a spiritual director is the director’s membership in the faith community”

p130 - “The kinds of men and women most likely to engender trust in others are those described in the same study as developed persons. They are not perfect, but they are relatively mature.”

p130 - “They are relatively unafraid of life with all its light and darkness, all its mystery.”

TRUST is vital. How do we (spiritual directors) gain and keep that trust?

Barry & Connolly

p135 - “Those who fear life cannot foster in others an open relationship with the living God.”

p140 - “Finally, spiritual directors ought to have some knowledge of the history of spirituality, enough to know that God has dealt with people in various ways and to understand the interaction among personality, culture, and the action of God in the development of a personal spiritual life and of schools of spirituality. Some knowledge of the diversity of Christian religious experience and a sympathetic awareness of non-Christian religious experience can help directors transcend their personal absolutes and open them to a greater sense of wonder toward the manifold experience of people with God.”

p140 - “To theological knowledge we must add, today, some knowledge of modern psychology. ‘Whoever, therefore, wants to help others spiritually must not only be himself a spiritual person and have a command of spiritual experience but also have sufficient psychological knowledge (without, however, falling into the error of wanting to do psychotherapy and thereby succumbing to the delusion that his psychological knowledge is sufficient for that).’”

p130 - “Spiritual directors will also need a deep faith in the desire and ability of God to communicate with people”

p111 - “Breadth of outlook and empathy develop as directors personally experience their own development and their own use of these criteria, and as they see increasing numbers of people who show these signs of being moved by the Spirit in an unexpected variety of ways. Their own categories begin to broaden, differentiate, and become more flexible as they listen to others’ experiences of God and let themselves perceive newness and originality.”

p132 - “Spiritual directors who want to foster a relationship between such people and their God need to have ‘a surplus of warmth’.”

p133 - “How does this ‘surplus of warmth’, this love for people as they are, show itself in spiritual direction? It appears in three attitudes: commitment, effort to understand, and spontaneity. Commitment is the willingness of spiritual directors to help directees grow in union with God and to commit their time, their resources, and themselves to that end. Effort to understand means that spiritual directors try to maintain a contemplative attitude toward directees,

try to perceive how the directees are experiencing God and life. Spontaneity means that spiritual directors are themselves, not controlled and inhibited by their role as spiritual directors, but able to express their own feelings, thoughts, and hopes when expressing them will be helpful to directees. Without spontaneity, 'commitment and effort to understand will appear cold, impersonal, and stereotyped'.

Why is such warmth needed in spiritual directors? In the first place, spiritual direction can mean hard, often unrewarding work. Directors enter into deep relationships with many people , and their own hearts are laid bare over and over again."

p137 - "These attitudes are not achievements to be arrived at by dint of hard work and diligent attention to responsibilities. Rather, they are gifts to be prayed for and to be grateful for. Moreover, they are not fixed and absolute realities that one must have, but ideals realistically to be hoped for."

BREAK

Case Study: Cecelia

Discernment of Spirits

1. Be aware.
2. Understand (recognize what is from God and what is not).
3. Accept or reject as is fitting.

****HWK: Case Study: Cecelia - write dialogue, followed by answering "As the director, how do you feel?" Email to Susan. For examples, see pages 99, 78, or 179.**

****HWK: Read chapters 10, 11, and the conclusion of Barry & Connolly.**