

Discernment

Discernment is the process by which you discover God's will. The process enables you to distinguish between movements coming from God and impulses that are not from God. Young adults discern a call to be single, married, priest or religious. Discernment also involves discovering a call to diocesan priesthood, diaconate, or a particular religious community.

In order to grow in your spiritual life, it is recommended that you have a spiritual director. A spiritual director can help guide you in the discernment process.

The Vocation Office provides a list of spiritual directors who can assist you in your discernment. A spiritual director does not give advice but listens, affirms and challenges you. A spiritual director gives you feedback on what you share about your relationship with God, with others, your work, ministry and discernment. A spiritual director will help you be accountable in your spiritual life.

Questions regarding Spiritual Direction

What is spiritual direction?

Spiritual direction is a process in which individual Christians are led and encouraged to discover their unique vocation in life. It is a means by which an individual may faithfully correspond to the grace of the Holy Spirit as it is revealed through all situations and events in life.

Spiritual direction has been a practice in the Christian tradition of entrusting another person with your experiences of God and life. Spiritual direction is a relationship in which a person discloses God's action in their lives and gets feedback from a trained director. Meeting with a director regularly gives you the opportunity to have a human sounding board for your experiences.

What is the role of the Spiritual Director?

The role of the director is to listen and to reflect back to you what may be going on in your life. Sometimes we don't notice the underlying meaning or we can't connect things that are happening to us. The spiritual director is an objective person who can encourage and challenge us to follow Jesus more faithfully. A spiritual director does not tell you what to do or which vocation to follow.

When do I go to a Spiritual Director?

Not everyone is in need of spiritual direction in every phase of life. It is a helpful means of discernment especially when an individual is open to discover the will of God in one's

life. A special time of direction may be when a person is searching to discover the way in which he/she is called to live out a Christian call to service. Some spiritual directors are more skilled in ongoing prayer development; others are more helpful in walking with another through the discernment of lifestyle choice.

How do I find a Spiritual Director?

Most dioceses will have a spiritual direction office who keeps a current listing of spiritual directors available in your area. The diocese may ask to meet with you to better understand your needs for direction and to help you find a director that is most suited for you.

The spiritual direction relationship is special and may last for many years. Take your time finding the person right for you. You might interview several directors before making a selection. In general, you should feel comfortable with the director's style.

Is Spiritual Direction free?

Many directors have this area for their full time ministry. The stipends for their services are often their livelihood. Rates differ for one session. Usually a session lasts an hour. Spiritual directors are professionals with degrees and training in spirituality or spiritual direction. Occasionally some directors have another full time ministry and can see some directees without charge.