

A Covenant for Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction is the art of Christian conversation and listening carried out in the context of a trusting relationship. A Spiritual Director is a faith companion who listens to your life stories with an ear for discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life. In the preface to his book on spiritual direction, Thomas Merton helps to clarify the proper role of a director:

... the director is not to be regarded as a magical machine for solving cases and declaring the holy will of God beyond all hope of appeal, but a trusted friend who, in an atmosphere of sympathetic understanding, helps and strengthens us in our groping efforts to correspond with the grace of the Holy Spirit, who alone is the true Director in the fullest sense of the word.

God is the true guide and director, while the human spiritual director is like a coach or midwife, assisting you in noticing and responding to the inner voice of God. The director is primarily interested in your experience of God and how you can follow God's call. That process is a spiritual journey into the truth about God, yourself, your relationships, your work, and the world.

The premise of Spiritual Direction is that God is present and active in your daily life in a multitude of (usually unnoticed) ways. When you slow down, begin to reflect, and take a long, loving look at what is happening around you, you begin to become aware of the experience of the presence of God. The more you know yourself the more you know God; and the more you know God, the more you know yourself and your direction and purpose. Intimacy with God leads naturally into transformation, healing, and action.

My work as your director is to focus my attention on your spiritual experience and points of self-discovery, to explore with you God's will and purpose in your life. Therefore, I will not try to analyze or fix you, even though our conversation may involve deep personal sharing and exploration of personal crisis and suffering. Spiritual direction is a conversation of the heart and uses all our human faculties (intuition, emotion, imagination, senses, and intellect) to discern God's presence and will for you, as you understand it. I pledge myself to listen with you for the voice of God and to help you notice God's movement in your life.

Our conversations are always confidential; however, for my professional growth I ask your permission to share pieces of information with my supervisor without using your name. It is customary for directors to be under direction and supervision as part of our commitment to improving our practice.

Direction sessions usually take place once a month and last for one hour. In the beginning, I suggest we meet for three sessions. At the end of that time we will evaluate how well direction is meeting your expectations and whether to continue. Thereafter we will meet according to a schedule that we agree upon and will evaluate every January whether the relationship is fruitful and should be continued or not. Usual fees for Spiritual Direction range from \$60 - \$95 per session.

NOTE: State law requires Spiritual Directors to report suspected cases of child or elder abuse, and professional ethics regarding confidentiality do not apply to self-endangerment (suicide) or harm to others.

In agreement _____(_____) Date _____

In agreement _____(Jennifer Aleman) Date _____