

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction is “help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God’s personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.” (William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*)

- **Spiritual direction focuses on religious experience.** It is concerned with a person’s actual experience of a relationship with God.
- **Spiritual direction is about a relationship.** The religious experience is not isolated, nor does it consist of extraordinary events. It is what happens in an ongoing relationship between the person and God. Most often this is a relationship that is experienced in prayer.
- **Spiritual direction is a relationship that is going somewhere.** God is leading the person to deeper faith and more generous service. The spiritual director asks not just “what is happening?” but “what is moving forward?”
- **The real spiritual director is God.** God touches the human heart directly. The human spiritual director does not “direct” in the sense of giving advice and solving problems. Rather, the director helps a person respond to God’s invitation to a deeper relationship.

What Is Distinctive about Ignatian Spiritual Direction?

Five distinctive features of the Ignatian approach.

[dotMagis Posts About Spiritual Direction](#)

From the category archives of the dotMagis blog.

More Information about Spiritual Direction

[Friends with God](#)

by William A. Barry, SJ

An esteemed spiritual director reflects on our relationship with God. It's like the relationship between adult children and their parents.

[Spiritual Direction in Daily Life \(PDF\)](#)

by William A. Barry, SJ

What spiritual directors do: *“Spiritual direction presumes that God is encountered in daily life.”*

[Perspectives in Understanding and Using the Spiritual Exercises](#)

by John Veltri, SJ

Different approaches that spiritual directors take to the Spiritual Exercises.

[Spiritual Directors International](#)

Spiritual Directors International provides programs, publications, and practices to support spiritual direction.

[Spiritual Directors International Learns from Joseph Tetlow, SJ](#)

Joseph Tetlow, SJ, explains spiritual direction, the role of prayer, and what nourishes him as a spiritual director. Fr. Tetlow even talks about how spiritual direction can lead to world peace.

[Ignatian Spirituality and Spiritual Direction \(PDF\)](#)

By Lilian Lian Bee Koh

Lilian Koh has written a competent introduction to Ignatian spirituality based primarily

on the writings of Thomas Green, SJ. The essay would be helpful for beginners.

[Spiritual Direction: Orientation, Relationship, Process](#)

By Joann Crowley

“As a process of mutual discovery and disclosure, spiritual direction opens new horizons of self-knowledge, compassion, and deep oneness with the Spirit of God.”

[How to Find a Spiritual Director Step-By-Step](#)

Spiritual Directors International is not specifically Ignatian, but the video takes viewers through steps in finding and interviewing a good spiritual director.

[Walking Together in Faith \(PDF\)](#)

by Dominic Maruca, SJ

“Has God provided you with the right qualities, the necessary disposition to minister to others as a [spiritual] companion? How can you know whether you’re called to this ministry to others?”

[Confirmation and Definitive Character of Choice \(PDF\)](#)

by Christine Gizard

A paper examining the process of confirming a decision in the Ignatian mode of decision making. Primarily for spiritual directors.

[Spiritual Accompaniment During the Spiritual Exercises According to St. Ignatius of Loyola \(PDF\)](#)

By Hermann Rodriguez Osorio, SJ

Osorio gives a wonderfully detailed description of the relationship between the spiritual

director and the retreatant making the Spiritual Exercises. The director creates an environment in which the retreatant can discover God's personal special care for him or her.

[Spiritual Conversation: A Privileged Apostolic Instrument of the Society of Jesus \(PDF; 187 KB\)](#)

by Germán Arana, SJ

A detailed look at what “conversation” means in Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit history. Full of insights, but primarily for specialists.