

## Spiritual Direction in the Ignatian Tradition



Finding God's  
presence in  
everyday life.

## Ignatian Spirituality

Spiritual Companionship is founded on the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order. A former courtier and soldier, St. Ignatius gave himself to Christ during recuperation from a war wound. His book, *The Spiritual Exercises*, epitomizes his spirituality and serves as the basis for the work of spiritual companions and directors.

Central to Ignatius' spirituality is the belief that God speaks to us through the events experienced in our everyday lives. Other characteristics of his spirituality include:

### **Relating to people as individuals**

God calls each individual in a particular way, and so, rather than impose their own way on anyone, spiritual or retreat directors listen to what God may be saying in the experience of each person's life.

### **Motivated by a sense of service or mission**

Ignatian spirituality encourages a relationship that produces commitment to a common cause.

### **Positive attitude toward all things**

St. Ignatius affirmed that all things in creation are made by God and given as gifts of love for our good, a revelation of Himself that we might respond to God appropriately.

### **Need for constant discernment**

Where is God present in the world today and where is God calling us? While God's gifts are for everyone, we must discern which are meant for us, at each moment and to what extent, and which are not.

*NOTHING IS MORE PRACTICAL  
than finding God, that is,  
Than falling in love  
in a quite absolute, final way.*

*WHAT YOU ARE IN LOVE WITH,  
what seizes your imagination,  
will affect everything.*

*It will decide what will  
get you out of bed in the  
morning, what you will do  
with your evenings,  
how you will spend your  
weekends, what you read, who  
you know, what breaks your  
heart, and what amazes you  
with joy and gratitude.*

*FALL IN LOVE, STAY IN LOVE  
and it will decide everything.*

Frequently attributed to  
Pedro Arrupe, SJ, Superior General  
The Society of Jesus (1965—1983)



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**S**piritual direction is about intensifying one's relationship with God. It is noticing and savoring God's presence in everyday living.

A spiritual director is someone with whom you can talk about your spiritual life. Because every aspect of your life affects your relationship with God, ordinary concerns such as work, family, relationships, emotional hurts, joy, anger, fears, anxieties, addictions or dreams are shared in spiritual direction. A director helps you explore whatever may block you from knowing God's loving presence as well as whatever may increase that awareness. You are helped to truly see yourself through God's eyes as the gift you are.

Spiritual direction helps develop the skill of discernment, which enables you to be more attentive to how God is leading and guiding you. You grow in noticing the ways in which God is touching your life, directly or indirectly.

Some people prefer the term "spiritual companionship" because "spiritual direction" sounds like one person giving directions, or orders, to another. What you call it doesn't make any real difference. The reality remains: it is conversation about your life in the light of faith.

Spiritual direction is not counseling. It is not therapy. It is not financial advice. It is not a friendship.

## Choosing Your Director



A spiritual director is someone called to and well-prepared for this ministry. She or he should be grounded in the Scriptures, sustained by a deep prayer life and carefully trained in the area of discernment.

It may be helpful if she or he has experience or expertise in areas related to your life situation. But it is not essential.

The relationship between you and a director is based on confidentiality and a sense of trust, which enable you to be comfortable and open with your director.

## Meeting with Your Director



The frequency of meeting with your director varies with individual need and circumstance. Generally, meeting every four weeks or so is ideal. More or fewer sessions may be appropriate for others.

## Cost

It is customary to offer a stipend to support the spiritual director in this ministry. You and the director should discuss this during your first session.



## How Do I Begin?

If you are interested in learning more about spiritual direction or would like to meet with a director, contact Ann Dillon, Manresa's Director of Ignation Formation.

She can answer your questions and will help you find a director who would be a good match for you. Ann can be reached by calling Manresa at 248.644.4933, Ext. 107 or you may email her at [adillon@manresa-sj.org](mailto:adillon@manresa-sj.org).