



Spiritual Direction

One definition of:

Spiritual Direction/Companioning

Spiritual Direction is a sacred ministry of accompanying another along their journey with God/the Holy/the Sacred. This way of accompanying offers a person a confidential and safe space where the person is given the freedom to search, reflect and discern what is happening on that journey. The importance of confidentiality in Spiritual Direction is bound by the code of ethics not to reveal what happens in the session, or to give the name of the directee, nevertheless the directee is free to reveal the director's name if she/he chooses to do so. (The only time this confidentiality must be broken is if the directee is being abused or life is threatened.)

Spiritual direction has deep roots in our Church's tradition beginning with Jesus and His listening to all who encountered him especially His disciples, the desert mothers and fathers of the early Church, to the Irish Monks among others, like St. Ignatius of Loyola with his Spiritual Exercises and retreats offered by many religious communities of both men and women.

“What is Spiritual Direction for Me?” An article by Sr. Molly Neville SNJM

The title Spiritual Director is a misnomer in the profession because the focus is not on just the “spiritual” but also on the full development of the human person. All of a person's life can be brought to the Spiritual Direction session. In addition, ONE person is not “Director”-as in one holier or more wise than another, but rather the companion acts as servant- a master listener to and reflector of the other's journey in faith. God alone is the Director...revealing...loving...challenging...calling to life, light, transforming, healing and integrating. Both Director and Directee are listening attentively to the Spirit during a session.

Spiritual Direction clearly reflects to others the essence of the relationship. It is not about therapy or problem solving or a relational substitute for friendship. The Spiritual Director's purpose is to support another in becoming more AWARE of God's presence and to support another to become more TRANSPARENT to oneself... to others... to the Sacred.

Why and Who

The Associate Coordinating Committee (ACC) would like to **suggest** that Spiritual Direction become part of the Associate Formation, as well as SNJM Associate life. We believe that this will enhance their formation and life experience respectively. It would offer each person the opportunity to have a companion, accredited in Spiritual Direction, that would provide the gifts of both active listening and tools for spiritual discernment, to understand how is God inviting/calling, and to help the person grow in knowledge of who she or he is becoming, in their relationship with God, their sisters and brothers... all humanity.

The ACC in conjunction with the SNJM Spiritual Ministries Network have worked to shape this program to both offer Spiritual Direction to associates, while providing a list of names of accredited Spiritual Directors in case the associate is unaware of such persons in their area. The Choice of Spiritual Direction and to have a Spiritual Director is left up to each associate. It is the suggestion of the ACC that the Spiritual Director is not a member of the associate's leadership or formation team.

Part of the SNJM fundamental values of our community's charism is education in the faith as well as the full development of the human person – whole person: mind, body, and soul/spirit. This is what we hope that the various facets of our associate formation accomplish, and we believe that Spiritual Direction is a gift to this formation/development of the person. Through this special relationship the one concerned can reflect on her/his relationship with God, the self, and others. The companion can assist in their various discernments: in his/her personal life, those related to the SNJM associate steps in their formation in addition to the local person(s) named for associate formation.

How

The ACC will meet in the fall of 2024 to present the SNJM formation program to the LALs and whomever they appoint to be the leader of formation (formation team) for their area. The ACC will also introduce the suggestion of spiritual direction as part of associate formation and give a list of spiritual directors where each is located and how to contact and if there is a stipend.