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Spiritual Direction in the Roman Catholic Tradition

What is present for you?

This article presents the meaning of spiritual guidance and spiritual direction. What it means to be a Christian in holy communion with God. “Spiritual direction is a graced process that helps an individual to believe in, to seize, and to appropriate the reality of the hope filled gift proclaimed by the One seated on the throne, “See, I make all things new!” (Rev21:5), (Barrette, 291).”

The article presents the history of spiritual direction in the catholic church. As I read this article, one of the things that stands out to me is that silent voice that ministers to my spirit, that kindly teaches me and guides me along the way in my walk with Christ.

What did you learn?

Article based on some of the traditions of roman catholic spiritual direction.(p.290)

Spiritual direction involves three persons: The directee (the seeker of spiritual direction), the director (the giver of spiritual direction/guidance and the main ingredient in this spiritual recipe is none other than the Holy Spirit. Spiritual direction helps a Christian understand and strengthen their relationship and oneness with God. This involves prayer, meditation, and extreme self-discipline. Achieving Spiritual focus is not an easy task but it is not impossible. As a Christian we must strive to attain this direction and focus. Eliminating negative and sinful habits and behavioral forces that hinder or seek to destroy our spiritual growth is vital to our spiritual focus

and oneness with God. It means to “experience and live the power and the fruits of this relationship (with God) by responding to Jesus’ gospel imperative of witness and mission in the kingdom of God, present in everyday life (Barrette, 290).” Spiritual direction is not a cultish type of training or training to learn to live a monastic kind of life, but it is a journey of spiritual growth, an experiential process. It seeks out to offer ourselves completely and truthfully to the Lord. It is a focus on the Lord that requires complete surrender of oneself in order to be in holy communion with the Lord. “It is grounded in the experience of the Divine (Barrette, 291).”

Another thing that I learned, well not really learned but that was interesting to see from this perspective is that Paul was (and is) a director of Spiritual Guidance. This is interesting for me because although I know that Paul’s letters to the church and his writings are all instruction on how to live Godly lives I have never seen him as a spiritual director, yet, this is exactly what he is. Paul helps us to grow spiritually with instruction and direction. This is why it is important to read the Bible daily and meditate on Gods word. Ultimately Pauls instruction helps us to achieve spiritual direction - “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27)

How will you approach the discipline moving forward?

This is not an easy task, but I have already been putting this spiritual discipline into practice. I tend to beat myself up when I am not my best but when I think about how far I have come from where I used to be it brings me great joy and amazement to see my progress. I know that the Lord is working in me and He is only making me better. Self-discipline is key to encompassing spiritual direction. Prayer and meditation are vital. I will dedicate more time to reading the Word of God every day and heeding to Paul’s instruction. For I am a work in progress...as we all are.