

## Resources available

### Spiritual Direction

Margaret Guenther. *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction* [Cowley Publications].

Thomas Hart. *The Art of Christian Listening* [Paulist Press].

Alan Jones. *Exploring Spiritual Direction* [HarperSanFrancisco].

Sue Monk Kidd. *When the Heart Waits: Spiritual Direction for Life's Sacred Questions* [HarperCollins]

Janet Ruffing. *Spiritual Direction* [Paulist Press]

### Spiritual Formation

Richard Foster. *Celebration of Discipline* [Harper & Row].

Richard Foster. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* [HarperCollins].

Kent Ira Groff. *Active Spirituality: A Guide for Seekers and Ministers* [The Alban Institute].

Ruben Job and Norman Shawchuck, editors. *A Guide to Prayer for All God's People* [The Upper Room].

Alan Jones. *Soulmaking: The Desert Way of Spirituality* [HarperCollins].

Alan Jones. *Passion for Pilgrimage: Notes for the Journey Home* [HarperCollins].

Alan Jones. *The Soul's Journey* [HarperCollins].

Ronald Rolheiser. *The Restless Heart* [Doubleday].

Ronald Rolheiser. *Against an Infinite Horizon* [Crossroad Publishing].

### About the Spiritual Growth Resources Committee

The Spiritual Growth Resources Committee consists of lay and ordained persons whose mission is to support and strengthen the spiritual life of the diocese.

Members bring a wide variety of interests and experiences to their ministry of service to enhance the prayer life of parishes and individuals.

If you have an interest in participating in the work of this committee, contact the chair listed below.

### How to contact us

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### To access this and other resources on the web

Go to

[www.stpaulschestnuthill.org](http://www.stpaulschestnuthill.org)

Scroll down and click on:

Diocese of Pennsylvania  
[Spiritual Growth Resources](#)

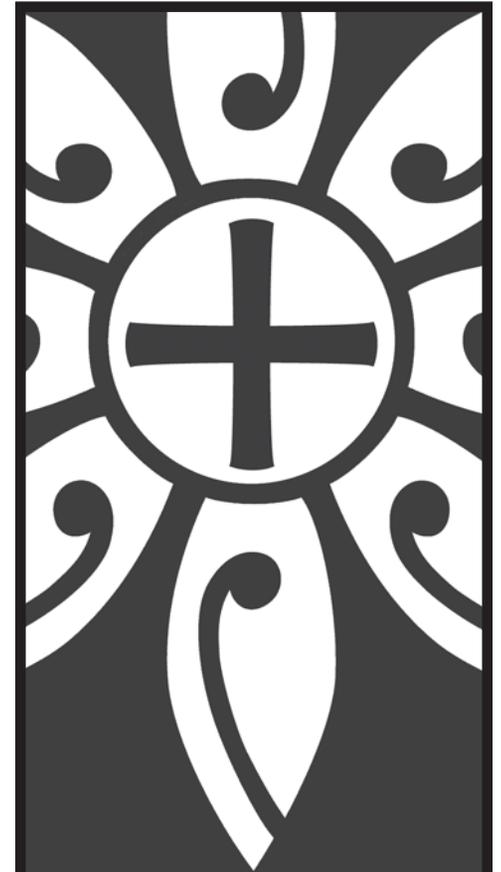


This takes you to the Spiritual Growth Resources Committee's introduction under

### [Links to Resources](#)

You will find brochures and information to browse or print.

## Spiritual Direction



What is Spiritual Direction?

How do I find a spiritual director?

What resources are available?

A brochure in the Spiritual Disciplines series created for individuals and parishes by the Spiritual Growth Resources Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania

## What is Spiritual Direction?

*Helping people discover and tell their sacred stories* is one description of spiritual direction.

There are two essential qualities for the relationship of spiritual direction – two people, walking together, attending to the presence of God, and attending to the other person’s hunger for God, with ears to listen, and a heart to hear. Spiritual direction differs from psychological counseling in that spiritual direction is an ongoing journey of uncovering, discovering, and discerning God in our life, while psychological counseling is more problem/resolution focused.

The desire for a spiritual director grows out of a person’s deepening desire for companionship with God. As much of spiritual direction is the art of **holy listening**, it is essential that the spiritual director and seeker spend time during and between meetings **listening with God**, which is **contemplative prayer**. The spiritual seeker and director seek God in all times and places of our life experience – grief and celebration, work and play, joy and sadness, success and failure. Our awareness to God holds meaning for both the spiritual director and seeker.

Therefore, spiritual direction is not two people just talking to one another. Spiritual direction is a **holy conversation** about discovering, uncovering, and following God who nurtures our thirsty soul from the living water present in the ordinary of everyday life. We assuage our thirst by cultivating our spiritual disciplines of prayer, reading Holy Scripture, meditation, journaling, contemplative retreats, and so on. These disciplines invite us to pay attention to the rhythms of life and seeing God’s grace in the creases of our life, in the gifts and struggles in our world of action.

This ancient art is known by many names – spiritual direction ... spiritual guidance ...

spiritual companion ... spiritual friends ... soul friends [Celtic *anamchara*] ... spiritual mentoring ... discipling. It has roots throughout the Bible, such as the friendship of David and Jonathan, Naomi and Ruth, Paul and Silas, Jesus and Peter. In our Christian history, examples are Francis of Assisi and Sister Clare, John Calvin and John Knox, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Eberhard Bethge, C. S. Lewis and George MacDonald, Evelyn Underhill and Baron von Hugel, Howard Thurman and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is two persons encouraging and praying for one another, mutual in giving and receiving [Romans 1:11-12].

## How do I find a spiritual director?

Always begin with prayer, asking God what qualities do I desire for my spiritual companion? What are my hopes/expectations/needs for this relationship? Should it be male or female? Within my own faith tradition, or outside it? The person you select must be someone safe, someone you can trust in with absolute confidence in sharing of your sacred stories.

- Begin in your parish, asking your priest or others about their experience of spiritual direction and suggestions of possible spiritual directors.
- You can contact the Spiritual Growth Resources Committee of the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Candace Woessner is the SGRC member coordinating referrals to local spiritual directors. She can be reached at tel. 610-326-6551, e-mail [cjwwjw2@comcast.net](mailto:cjwwjw2@comcast.net).
- You can also go to the website for *Spiritual Directors International* [[www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org)] for their international directory of spiritual directors.

## How do I begin?

After you have received the name of a spiritual director, contact the person and talk over the phone to come to know one another. You may seek a day/time for an initial visit to speak more to the qualities you seek in the spiritual director, your hopes/needs/expectations, etc. In all these steps along your journey in spiritual direction, **PRAY!** Keep open to the Spirit of God moving amongst you both. You might want to covenant to meet for six months, and then evaluate the relationship.

## How frequently do I meet with my spiritual director?

Usually once a month, although you may meet every couple of weeks for the first sessions to come to know one another, telling of your stories, establishing trust, and agreeing on a covenant of prayer and meeting.

A monthly meeting provides a rhythm that is helpful so the relationship does not become too problem-centered or co-dependent. You find that you are very intentional in paying attention to the direction of the Spirit as a result of your time together as you pray for one another between meetings.

## What about money

The tradition of spiritual direction has been a “gift of the church, to the church, for the sake of the world.” However, a companion would typically offer some form of honorarium, whether it is to the mission and ministry of the church, or a set charge for the vocation of the spiritual director.

