

What is Spiritual Direction?

Some thoughts about what to expect

Firstly, although spiritual direction is the traditional title this ministry is NOT about the director telling you what to do, but is a ministry which involves listening, travelling alongside you on your spiritual journey; discovering, exploring and discerning with you the ways in which your relationship with God may be deepening.

The spiritual director will offer a sacred and safe place of acceptance, attention, accompaniment, learning, growth and challenge. In order to offer such a place the spiritual director will recognise that you are on a unique path. The role of the spiritual director is to travel alongside you as you become more fully who you are created by God to be. Trained in the Christian spiritual tradition and continuing to deepen their own spiritual life, the director will listen, discern and reflect from that perspective, recognising that God is present in all human experience.

The ministry of spiritual direction is not easily defined and cannot be reduced to one simple model. The following phrases give a flavour of what spiritual direction might be, but not all of these phrases apply to every session.

- Giving support to a person and helping them to discover the work of the Holy Spirit/God in his or her life
- Companionship a person seeking the meaning of life
- Helping to sustain faith and courage in times of darkness, pain, distress or personal transition
- A friendly relationship in which one person helps another to discern and respond to God's will for them
- Spiritual direction is not counselling but uses similar skills, however the emphasis is on the directee's relationship with God rather than 'the problem'
- It can involve discovery and exploring, and deepening the relationship with God
- Becoming who we are created to be
- Offering listening, acceptance and support for the individual
- Recognising that each person's journey is unique, there is not only one path
- Healthy respect for other religious spiritual traditions

To prepare yourself for a meeting with a spiritual director - come as you are and pray that the Holy Spirit may illuminate your reflections

- What's going on in your life - moods and feelings?
- Where are you particularly aware of God's presence or apparent absence in your life?
- What are your current preoccupations? In your innermost heart what do you hope for?