

# SPIRITUAL DIRECTION & VOCATION PROMOTION

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# NOTES ON SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

## General Introduction:

Spiritual Direction finds its place in the wider horizon of our quest for holiness or the perfection of love: this is our most fundamental vocation and our greatest fulfillment. To achieve that aim we have to consider the means of perfection of which Spiritual Direction is one and a distinguished one.

These are the **means of perfection**:

Interior (belonging to the person):

1. Desire of perfection/holiness
2. To know God and oneself (self-knowledge & knowledge of God)
3. To do the will of God (Conformity to God's will)
4. Prayer

Exterior (coming from outside the person):

1. Spiritual Direction
2. Life Plan/Project (includes the vocational journey and the status in life)
3. Spiritual Reading & Inputs (Retreats, etc.)
4. Sanctification of public relations

## Introduction

Spiritual Direction is present in all cultures and religions in different ways and with different names: Elders' advice, Guru, philosopher like Socrates is a classic example.

In the Bible, and especially in Jesus' example, we have the foundations of Spiritual Direction (cf. *Titles a part*).

In the history of Christian Spirituality, Spiritual Direction appears as a normal means of spiritual progress. During the time of Monasticism, the Abbot and Abbess appear as father/mother figures to whom the individual monk/nun will go for spiritual advice. During the time of the Mendicant Orders, The Guardian appears as an elder brother, a brother figure, according to the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi. Spiritual Direction finds a large foundation and development in the modern times, especially because of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and his "Spiritual Exercises" which is a handbook for Directors of souls in the dynamics of the 30 day Retreat.

Saint Teresa of Avila wrote: “God likes so much that a person subjects himself/herself to the direction of another person that He doesn’t want us to give credit/faith to supernatural truth communicated by himself if they do not first pass through the channel of a human mouth”.

We alone can easily deceive ourselves. The Latin proverb “*Nemo iudex in domo sua*” (Nobody is judge in his house). We see, for example, that even in secular life, doctors don’t usually cure themselves, but, when they are sick, they run to another doctor. Saint Teresa of Avila laments the absence or scarcity of Spiritual Directors and especially Spiritual Directors who are theologically prepared and knowledgeable.

### **In the journey of spiritual life,**

- If you are a beginner(PURIFICATION), we need help to leave behind a life of sin, to pursue penance and asceticism, to go through periods of aridity and dryness;
- If you are a proficient (ILLUMINATION) and occupied, committed to the practice of human virtues, you need to overcome tiredness and boredom, to persevere in the effort;
- If you are advanced in the way of perfection (UNION), you need to perceive and cultivate the gift of the Spirit and to be attentive to God’s inspirations...

### **THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**

1. The art of leading souls progressively from the beginning of spiritual life to the heights of Christian perfection (accompaniment).
2. Personal relationship between two people in which one assist the other to grow in spiritual life (Spiritual Fatherhood, *pater pneumatikos*, Friendship, Facilitator...)
3. The Confessor is a judge with power to forgive; the Spiritual Father or Director is an elder, a friend who gives advice.

### **SPIRITUAL FATHER**

1. Mediator between the Holy Spirit (the real, authentic director of the believers) and the subject/person who asks advice, help;
2. One person assisting another person to realize (make real) his/her relationship with God: “a companionship (companioning) on the journey to God so that the relationship with God becomes real in a person’s life (“Who is God for me and who am I for Him?”).
3. Spiritual Direction is never “direction” in the sense of “ruling/dominating”, but can complement companionship with pointing out the way, the direction. Because in Christian life, we do not journey aimlessly, Jesus is the Way. Spiritual Direction has always to do with Jesus, since Jesus is our relationship with God.

4. Spiritual accompaniment: mountain guide who knows the way because he has done it before and can accompany...
5. S.D. is different from Pastoral Care which implies giving more information about our faith, or theological clarification or consolation versus grief or sympathetic/empathetic listening to people's problems...Spiritual Direction is directly concerned with the person's actual experiences in his/her relationship with God, especially in the practice of prayer, what is happening in prayer...

## DEFINITION

S. D. is a help given by a Christian to another which enable the person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him /her, to respond to this personally communicating God and to live out the consequences of this relationship.

The heart of Christianity is the experience in faith, hope and love that Jesus is my Savior and the Savior of the world and that I want to respond to him. In other words: that the heart is prayer and a life based on prayer: "Lord, teach me how to pray". This comes from the Ignatian Spirituality, the tradition of the Spiritual Exercises by which we believe that God acts during our prayer periods and we are guided to understand and become perceptive of God's ways by the retreat master or guide.

The dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises continue somehow the tradition of the "Lectio Divina": a journey towards contemplation or the prayer of the heart which is conversion. The function of the Guide or Spiritual Director is not always strictly necessary, but it is always convenient and useful and sometimes absolutely necessary.

NECESSARY QUALITIES of the person directed:

1. Sincerity
2. Obedience
3. Perseverance (not too many changes, interruptions, but stability, steadiness)
4. Discretion (each person is different, no use in relating to other what goes on in Spiritual Direction, also to keep peace of mind...).

Qualities, attitudes towards the spiritual father:

1. Respect
2. Confidence/trust
3. Supernatural love (excessive attachment and sensual affection is inappropriate and even wholesome friendship can get in the way of being able to correct effectively, although friendship can help and there is a model of S.D. based on friendship).

## AREAS OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION: SPIRITUAL LIFE

The journey of the soul to holiness or the perfection of love. The spiritual formation of the soul: from the Pride Form to the Christ Form.

In purification: in order to overcome sin; in illumination: in order to exercise virtue; in union: in order to recognize and accept the gifts of the Spirit.

These are the main areas: Prayer Life, Discernment, Relationships (Family, community, others: friendship), Vocation, consecrated Life or life of Vows, Union with God/Contemplation, Apostolate.

### Areas covered by the Formative Encounter

1. Temperament/self-knowledge/character formation
2. Socialization-community life
3. Vocation history and motivations
4. **Human Maturity:** formation to
  - *Communication (against fear and isolation)*
  - *Acceptance (against prejudices)*
  - *Friendship (against selfishness)*
  - *Responsibility (against superficiality)*
  - *Perseverance (against inconstancy)*

### Areas covered by Spiritual Direction

1. Life of Grace: Renunciation and fight against sin/Living the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion/Practice of the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and charity.
2. Practice of human virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and temperance
3. “Sentire cum Jesu”: Feelings and self-control
4. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit
5. Life of prayer
6. **Spiritual Maturity:**

Appreciation of silence and recollection

- *Desire for personal prayer*
- *Personalization of the Word of God*
- *Capacity and willingness of sharing within oneself*
- *Openness with the Spiritual Director*

## JESUS IS THE MODEL

The Blessed Humanity of Jesus is the blueprint/model. Christian Spiritual Direction is rooted in Christ, the way, the truth and the life. He is the ultimate source of spiritualization, interiorization and sanctification. The One who from his fullness pours out on us the Holy Spirit, God's love. This is why the Spiritual Director in Christianity cannot be only the sympathetic listener, but he must also give direction, point the way who is Jesus. Jesus is also the model of Spiritual Director par excellence: ex. Nicodemus, Natanael, Samaritan woman, especially his relationship with Peter...

## MODELS OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

1. Pastoral
2. Charismatic: special, extraordinary gift like the one of Saint Pio of Petralcina or the Curate of Ars or St. Ignatius, Francis De Sales, Josemaria Escrivà de Balaguer....A very good thing, but God is also in the ordinary.
3. Friendship: to be attentive that the human aspect doesn't obliterate or diminish the spiritual...
4. Incarnational: trains to see God in everything. Ignatian, based on the dynamics of consolation/desolation and making use of the consciousness exams. Danger: to belittle or neglect prayer and supernatural aspect...
5. Psychological: look at the feelings, wholistic, but can lead to too many psychological problems...

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Our life is a net of relationships: first with God (all the area of prayer); with people: this is an area which tests and fosters our spiritual and human growth and maturity and is embraced by our prayer life.

Relations are bound to come up in the course of Spiritual Direction, charged with emotions when they concern the family;

community life is a source of problems and difficulties if we are monopolized by the difficulty brought about by differences in temperament, tastes, opinions, cultural elements, likings and disliking... The community is a gift and a conquest.

Friendship and human love: looking for help in understanding what is going on when we are emotionally disturbed...The relationship may be an inordinate one with inordinate attachment...exclusive friendship, romantic aspect, surrounded by gossip...

Expressions of affection play an important role in relationships. Prudence is required in expression of affection: inappropriate relationship which has still appropriate expression

has a chance of becoming controlled; a good, appropriate relationship with inappropriate expression of affection may become bad/inappropriate.

An ordinate relationship leads to Jesus and his values, to our authentic self, to a sense of peace and comfort, to freedom. It is support, empowerment, fullness of heart, joy.

An inordinate relationship takes us away from Jesus, to the values of the world, to dependence, secrecy, restlessness and dissatisfaction, compromise, sin.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FAMILY

Some guidelines because this is an area that brings many problems to young people in formation and to young religious.

“Love is thicker than water”. We must appreciate family ties, keep alive the relationship with the family, be good sons and daughters of our families. We owe much to our families. Even in the field of vocation, most of the times we are supported by our families like Jesus by Mary. Sometimes we are opposed, but if we are strong and keep the links, changes usually happen. Religious vocation is an enrichment for the family and a blessing from God. It should be the religious who draws the family closer to God, not the family who draws the religious away from God.

Religious vocation implies a real sacrifice of family ties, a sacrifice which we should look in the eye and embrace consciously and for good without compromise. On the other hand, it is the law of life as it is reflected also in the Bible: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:23-24 (Cf. Matthew 19:4-5): “A man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife...” Our parents suffer when we leave them for marriage or religious life, but if we succeed, they are happy because it is the law of life.

“The love of God is thicker than blood” : Our new family is the community of the congregation and the people we serve. They have the right of our loyalty. To serve the Church (God & people) is as serious as serving a husband/wife and children. In the Gospels, we have the example of Mama Mary (John 2:1-11 “Do as he will tell you”; John 19:25-27 Mary under the cross of Jesus; Acts 1:14 Mary praying with the first Christian community) and Jesus: Luke 2:41-52 Jesus in the temple; Matthew 12:48 (46-50) “Who is my mother...”; Luke 14:25-35 ...).

In case of extreme emergency, the Superiors will allow to help: in my experience: Sr. Giulia, Sr. Virginia, Fr. Marco Canovi. Quite a few times, the reason of helping the family for those who leave the vocation hides other more personal reason, it is used as an excuse.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

I will not develop here this topic of the community which requires much time and space. Relationship with the community should find a balance in our mature life that allow us to feel at home and enjoy peace of mind:

1. It is God who brings us together, who gave me these brothers: it is a community of faith;
2. We are all different: learn to accept the others as they are. If you want room for yourself, give room to the others: tolerance and forgiveness: “Your only debt is mutual love” (Romans 13:8).
3. “Don’t ask what your community will do for you, ask yourself what you can do for your community” (Country: J. F. Kennedy). See the marvelous passage about mutual love in Romans 12:3-16.
4. “We are the keepers of our brothers’ solitude/privacy”: create an atmosphere of recollection, study, prayer, respect...
5. We should take it for granted that the difficulty of living together: give and take, rubbing elbows, be ready to make up, to give some space and find some space...The need of some privacy...The dynamics of community life should not monopolize our life, taking all our attention, wasting all our energies. Our energies of mind and heart should be for Jesus, our God, in prayer and for the people we serve, for our mission, our apostolate.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS: LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

**Sexuality:** our condition as male or female. Our sex. Sexuality is part of our personality, a gift from creation, which will stay with us even beyond death. A blessing and a source of positive energy. Masculinity and Femininity. Cf. Genesis 1,2.

“From the very beginning, humanity is described as articulated in the male-female relationship. Woman is another “I” in a common humanity that therefore appears as the unity of the two. Humanity is a relational reality. An ordered world is born of differences brought together in harmony by relationships.

The capacity to love –reflection of the image of God who is love – is disclosed in the spousal character of the body in which the masculinity and femininity of the person is expressed.

Their equal dignity as persons is realized as physical, psychological and ontological complementarity. Sexuality is a fundamental, integral component of personality. The human dimension of sexuality flows into the theological dimension since Christian life is a nuptial mystery”.



**Chastity:** the virtue by which we deal with our sexuality according to the different circumstances of our life and condition. It is a human and Christian virtue. Our modern world do not value chastity, but in the Bible we have the beautiful passage of 1Corinthians 6:12-20 "...The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body...So, glorify God with your body".

Counteract the prejudice of "consenting adults" and "Pornography" ("A cesspool in your house").

**Love:** to see/make the beauty and the goodness of another person. Saint Augustine. "Thinking of me, God creates me, loving me he makes me lovable".

### **Stages of love:**

1. Attraction: romantic, sentimental, emotional stage (essential, beautiful, necessary but superficial, incomplete...)
2. Commitment: the decision of the will, it implies freedom...
3. The Cross of Jesus: Mo. Teresa: "Love until it hurts" and then "Love until it hurts no more".
4. Time, perseverance, faithfulness.

**Friendship and Apostolate:** service not domination: cf. Matthew 20:20-28 "... The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many...". Very beautiful the link between prayer and service in Mo. Teresa: "The fruit of silence is prayer; the fruit of prayer is faith; the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service (which is love in action) and the fruit of service is joy and peace".

**Friendship :** Love among equals. "Friendship either finds equals or make equals". No jealousy, possessiveness, exclusiveness. "*Les amis de mes amis sont mes amis*".

**Friendship and community:** Introduce your friends to your community and let the community not suppress the joy of friendship.

### **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**

1. God is the greatest mystery, but the biblical God is a mystery of self-communication.
  - Exodus 3:1.12 The burning bush
  - Isaiah 43:1-7 A love relationship with God
2. PRAYER is love. Cf. Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-8
  - *Self-disclosure:* show yourself to God
  - *Silence* (comfortable)
  - *Peak experiences*

- *Listening to God in the Scripture* : AFFIRMATION: Luke 1:26-38 Mary at the Annunciation; John 1:43-51 Nathanael: God cannot love that which is not beautiful and He loves each one of us. God doesn't make junk.
- *Listening to God in your body*

The Spiritual Director is the third person who helps us in our relationship with God. Action proves that there is genuine prayer. "By their fruits you shall know them". God's love becomes love for people.

The dynamics of the love relationship with God are similar to those with people. Attraction is essential for the beginning of a love relationship. We have to become aware of the attraction, right chemistry, magic moments. It is developed by external orientation: spending time together, giving gifts to each other; then internal orientation: memories of encounters, desire of being together; imagination that rests in the other, in God. Love is a decision that must be made over and over again, countless times.

Prayer is love relationship with God through the Blessed Humanity of Jesus (John 1:18 "Nobody has ever seen God; the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known") and is marked by

- *gratuitousness* (no calculation, no profit, but spontaneity) and
- *abundance*: those who love are not mean but generous (Martha & Mary; the Anointing of Bethany)

Emotions, feelings are involved because of the Blessed Humanity of Christ:

- *The place of encounter between God and man;*
- *The sacrament of our salvation;*
- *The model of our perfection;*
- *Therefore the object of our love and contemplation.*

Because of Jesus living in people: experience God in friendship "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters it is to me that you do it" says Jesus. And Jesus is God.

## WHAT IS PRAYER?

### 1. Essential Prayer:

Vital dependence on God. Existential feeling of our creatureliness, our fragility and the fact of our life being in God's hands: Psalm 90. God is a loving Father: Psalm 23, 131.

"Prayer is loving acceptance of God's loving will in my life" (K: Rhaner).

2. **Actual Prayer:** the fact of saying prayers or praying: external orientation: spending time, bringing gifts...

**Types of prayer:**

*Vocal:* of the lips

*Mental:* of the mind

**Lectio Divina:** *Lectio:* reading

*Meditatio:* reflecting

*Oratio:* praying

*Contemplatio:* contemplation

*Collatio:* sharing

3. **Contemplation:** the prayer of the heart, prayer of simplicity, prayer of quiet.

Awareness of God's presence. "A long, loving look at God who is here/there/everywhere. Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Becoming contemplative or seeing God in everything, in all things:

1. God is present with his gifts: thanksgiving, gratitude
  2. God is present within the gifts: reverence
  3. God is active in the heart of reality/matter: service
- "In Him we live, in Him we move, in Him we exist" (Acts 17:28).

The Spiritual Director guides, helps, facilitates, accompanies our love relationship with God, our Prayer Life.

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AND DISCERNMENT

Biblical references: Ephesians 4:1-7.11-13; John 1:43-51; Romans 8; Philippians 1:1-11; 1 John 4:1-6; Psalm 139....

Spiritual Direction is totally concerned with discernment: conversation between two people in God's presence, aiming at dispelling the obstacles along the spiritual journey. The Spiritual Director helps to discern:

- *Inaccurate faith views*
- *Distorted images of God*
- *Spiritual blindness or schotosis*
- *Inordinate attachments, our way of being comfortable, doing things my way*
- *Resistances of living for Christ/putting in practice the Gospel values/Beatitudes (Christ's value system)*

Discernment: the fruit of a deeper yes to God in the here and now; to try to find God's word for me here and now and to say yes. Discernment is either individual or communitarian. Discernment is both a way of life and a process of deliberation. The second works in the context of the first: the process will not work if it is not a way of life first.

- A. Discernment as a way of life: listening attentively to myself, others, the world, Scripture (all created reality) so I can catch the voice of the Creator calling me to him. Every circumstance of our life is an opportunity to meet the Lord.

4 STEPS:

1. Dynamic view of the present circumstances as the place where God acts, here and now, calling me. To see God in everything, in all things. Incarnational spirituality: like God became man in Jesus, in a similar way, He touches me through the happenings of my present life. The sacrament of the present moment. To make me able to find God in the present happenings, I have to *Examine my consciousness*, the flow/stream of consciousness (Ashenbrenner).

*5 moments:*

- (1) Move into the awareness of God's presence: How is God working in all this, everything?*
- (2) Gratitude: Thank you, Lord!*
- (3) How did you try to break through to me, Lord, today?*
- (4) The negative moments of my response*
- (5) Ask forgiveness and commit yourself to listen/look for the Lord in the flow of consciousness tomorrow.*

2. Dynamic view of my past life as salvation history. My past is separated from the present by chronology, time, but my memory brings to the present. It becomes an opportunity to recognize the Lord's work in my past (dynamism) or to heal the memories of their negative content through God's grace.

The negative experiences become positive through prayer, God's grace, God's presence. Healing of memories.

Nobody is perfect. We live through the concrete circumstances and find an equilibrium/balance/self-esteem/self-worth because /with the Lord. Everything must become life-giving/positive/constructive/peaceful.

3. (In the dynamism of the presence and the past there is the Lord) Personal relationship with God in /through/with JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER. "To know me is to know the Father". The place of the Blessed

Humanity of Jesus in my spirituality. All the saints went to God through Jesus/to perfection through Jesus (Cf. Teresa of Avila's statement in her Autobiography quoted in the Breviary, October 15).

IGNATIAN CONTEMPLATION: of the mysteries/happenings of Jesus' life and death, etc. through the Gospels' accounts. To stand inside the mystery, using our imagination. Aim: to become like Jesus, to assimilate his value system, same feelings, to love Him affectionately...

#### 4. SENTIRE CUM JESUS: to have the same feelings (*sentire*) as Jesus:

- Feelings are neither good nor bad (instinctive reactions)
  - *Recognize the feeling to be there*
  - *Acknowledge the feeling as yours*
  - *Reflect (cool down) on it: where is it coming from, where is it taking me?*
  - *Act upon the feeling: accept the feeling if good, control if negative, reject...*

The Spiritual Director helps the person to get in touch with her/his feelings and to control them through prayer and reflection.

AGERE CONTRA/ORARE CONTRA: traditional ascetic discipline of self control (freedom from inordinate attachments). Prayer for inner freedom in order to overcome psychological mechanisms of resistance:

- *Procrastination*: to delay commitment to face the feeling
- *Rationalization*: attempt to justify
- *Fear of suffering*: act on the feeling, even if painful, to gain your freedom for Jesus.

### B. DISCERNEMENT AS A PROCESS OF DELIBERATION

This type of discernment is better done within the Discernment as a way of life. It is a process meant to reach a decision/choice about important matters, especially vocation or status in life.

#### **STEPS in prayer:**

- *Clarify* the options
- Gathering *data*
- *Praying* for freedom to take a decision

- Apply “*touchstone*”: enter into a trial-experience connected with the choice and see the reaction of your feelings: joy/serenity/fullness of heart or restlessness/dissatisfaction
- *Decide* where the Lord gives the deepest feeling. St. Ignatius of Loyola, master of discernment, gives a help for decision:
  - *Imagine you are in your death bed....*
  - *Pretend to be the Spiritual Director...*
  - *Imagine to be before God, at the Last Judgement...*
- *Confirmation*: once the choice is made, in the course of living it out, if we experience habitual peace of mind/joy.

## JESUS AS SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Jesus is our model in his dealing with different people about their journey to God, affirming, suggesting, correcting: Nicodemus, Samaritan woman, Nathanael, Rich young man, disciples of Emmaus....

The best example is Jesus’ relationship with Peter:

*John* 1:41-42      Jesus looks intensely at Simon and gives him his new name: Peter

*Luke* 5              Peter is attracted but afraid: “Go away from me, I am a sinner”

Jesus lived with Peter and the disciples or better he made them live with him (“Come & see...Follow me...They lived with him”. Jesus prayed in front of his disciples and taught them how to pray (Spiritual Direction in an atmosphere of prayer). Jesus announces his ideal and way of life- New Law: the Beatitudes and the consequences (*Matthew* 5,6 &7) : Spiritual Direction is never man to man, but always under the light of God and the example of Jesus: best Spiritual Direction is done by the Risen Christ. Jesus scolds/expresses frustration/reprocess... Jesus heals, expels demons...

*Matthew* 14:22-23 (Jesus walking on the water with Peter): Spiritual Director like Jesus take the person by the hand to give a hand to overcome difficulties...

*Matthew* 16:13-21 (Peter’s profession of faith): a moment of grace: to make one aware, point out to him/her that this is what happened... Then Jesus’ reproaches to Peter: he should have known better! 24-28: take up your cross daily...Starting to live out Christ’s sequel which includes the cross...

*Matthew* 17 (The Transfiguration) like a day of recollection: not too much talking, but listening to Jesus...

*Matthew 18:21-22* (Forgiving) to forgive ourselves and to forgive others is one of the most important sign of the Kingdom of God.

*John 13:6-11* (Peter at the Washing of the feet): learn how to receive. Jesus washes our feet to teach us how to receive because love is giving & receiving.

*Matthew 26:31-46* (Gethsemane) Peter boasts his fidelity and Jesus prophesizes Peter's denial...Jesus asks for support...he prays against himself... Peter fails to support ... In *John 18:10-11*, Peter cuts the ear of Malchus and Jesus gives a lesson of non-violence.

*Luke 22:61-62*: Peter's failure and sin is the occasion of his quality leap because he experiences humility and repentance as a consequence of the fact that the Lord turned and looked at him and Peter wept bitterly.

*John 21:15-17*: redress of the denial, mature love and the implications: no more escaping from the cross. Jesus makes Peter take the quality leap.

“God did not call us to be successful but to be faithful” (Mother Teresa).

## BIBLE REFERENCES ABOUT SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

*Qoheleth 4:7-12* Better to be two in life: the need for help

*Tobit 4:18* “Ask advice of every wise person; never scorn any profitable advice”

*Sirach 37:7-15* Avoid false advisers, listen to good ones, but especially follow the advice of your heart and of God.

*Psalms 23* The Lord is my Shepherd

*Psalms 90* Our human existence in God's light: beautiful and wise.

*Psalms 131* Childlike trust in God

*Psalms 139* Against spiritual blindness: God knows me

*Mark 10:17-27* Jesus and the rich young man ( a case of failure of the Spiritual Director because of greed in the disciple)

*Matthew 25:1-13* The foolish bridesmaids (a failure because of stupidity/foolishness/ignorance)

*Acts 9:1-19* Paul's conversion and Ananias (17-19)

*Acts 18:24-26* Apollos helped by Aquila and Priscilla

*Acts* 20:17-37 Speech of Paul to the elders of the church in Ephesus at Miletus (verse 31)

*Galatians 5:13-25* Need to discern “Walk by the Spirit and do not gratify the flesh (the fruits of the Spirit)”

*1 Thessalonians 2:7-13* Love and respect “We were gentle among you like a nurse talking care of her children”

*1 Corinthians 12,13* Variety of charisms/gifts but the same Spirit. The best gift is love.

## Romans 7,8 Spiritual struggle and life in the Spirit

2 Timothy 1:1-13 Teacher and disciple “I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you”

2 Corinthians 13:5-14 Responsibility “Examine yourselves in order to see whether you are holding with your faith”

*Ephesians* 4:1-13 Walking along: journey of formation and the help of the community

### 1 John 4:1-6 Discernment of spirits

## ABOUT THE LOVE OF GOD

*Isaiah 43:1-7* God's love for me

## *Luke 1:26-38 Annunciation: Mary's Trinitarian Experience/Affirmation*

*Luke* 10:36-42 Martha and Mary

## *John 12:1-8 Anointing at Bethany*

*1 Timothy* 2:1-6 Universal salvific will

## Romans 8:28-32 Predestination

## *John* 1:43-51 Jesus' affirmation

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