

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PTH 975 Leading Others in Spiritual Direction

February 17-21, 2003

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DESCRIPTION:

The American social revolution of the 1960's rocked the long expected stability of the United States to its very core. After the Chicago riots in 1968, and the horrific moment when the U.S. National Guard fired upon and killed students at Kent State University in 1970, the United States entered into an unsteady truce with the new realities.

These realities continue to plague the American populace in increasing crescendos of fear and uncertainty. None of us will ever forget the horrific images of the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City, on September 11, 2001.

The specter of that moment will not soon be forgotten by the people of the United States – and by those far-flung souls scattered around the world --wherever television and the internet beam their dreary images of shattered lives and dashed hopes.

Even before the last plumes of smoke were carried away by the breezes Americans were introduced to our "New War." Even as I write this introduction to spiritual direction and to the role of the spiritual director, I hear in the background the news of September 11, 01 – announcements of the day's results of our "New War." And I see on my computer screen shadowy images of our "new enemy."

From time immemorial; when humans have found themselves in conditions of prolonged danger, fear and abject uncertainty sooner or later they engage in serious contemplation of the fickleness and uncertainties of life – leading many people into serious explorations of 'matters of the spirit.'

The same can be said for people who "fall" into high moments of ecstasy – such as love, marriage, graduation from college, an unexpected inheritance of a large amount of money, etc.

In such circumstances, so says Ignatius of Loyola, many people find themselves in a "Black Hole Experience," an experience in which the individual finds himself or herself drawn into the deep darkness of the unknown recesses of their souls.

In today's society there is a vast and growing hunger for spiritual direction. But there is a great dearth of competent spiritual directors to serve the needs of those who are searching for spiritual companions and competent spiritual direction.

Perhaps the setting in which spiritual direction should be most offered is in the local congregation. Unfortunately, few pastors in America have pursued training in spiritual direction. On the other hand, those who have received training in spiritual direction soon find themselves inundated by people who seek for a spiritual director.

Spiritual direction is a ministry not limited to ordained clergy. Lay guides who are trained and competent can offer spiritual direction as well as the ordained members of the church. Indeed, in many instances people seeking spiritual direction prefer to receive direction from non-ordained persons.

Pastors would do well to obtain training in spiritual direction for themselves and then train laypersons within the congregation to function as spiritual guides.

This course in Spiritual Direction is offered as the sequel of a required course entitled "PTH 901 Renewing the Spiritual Leader." which was taught by Dr. Roger Heuser. The books from that course that you should pay particular attention to are:

1. *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*. Norman Shawchuck & Rueben Job
2. *The Spirit of Disciplines*. Dallas Willard
3. *Streams of Living Water*. Richard Foster

If you have already been using *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants* for a length of time, you may wish to begin using *A Guide to Prayer for All God's People* as a fresh change of diet.

The intent of this course is to equip the scholar with foundational understandings and resources necessary to serve as a spiritual director for persons who are seeking guidance to assist them in making sense out of the mysterious ways God seems to be 'at work' in their lives.

REQUIRED TEXTS: These texts are to be read prior to the class. The lectures and class discussions will presume a working knowledge of these materials:

- Norman Shawchuck and Rueben Job. *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*. Nashville: The Upper Room.
- Jeanette A. Bakke. *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000.
- Maureen Conroy, R.S.M. *The Discerning Heart: Discovering a Personal God*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 1993.
- Katherine M. Dyckman and L. Patrick Carrol. *Inviting the Mystic: Supporting the Prophet*. New York: Paulist Press, 1981.
- Tilden Edwards. *Spiritual Director, Spiritual Companion*. New York: Paulist Press, 2001.
- Kenneth Leech. *Soul Friend: Spiritual Direction in the Modern World*, Revised Edition. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 2001.
- Howard Rice. *The Pastor as Spiritual Guide*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998.

Janet K. Ruffing. *Spiritual Direction: Beyond the Beginnings*. New York: Paulist Press, 2000.

RECOMMENDED READING:

- William A. Barry. *Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God: A Theological Inquiry*. New York: Paulist Press, 1992.
- Wm. A. Barry and William J. Connolly. *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*. San Francisco: Harper, 1986 Revised.
- Rose Mary Dougherty. *Group Spiritual Direction: Community for Discernment*. New York, Paulist Press, 1995. (This book is a "how to" book for offering group SD)
- Julie M. Douglas. *Handbook for Spiritual Directors*. NY: Paulist Press, 1998.
- William A. Meninger. *The Committed Life*. New York: The Continuum Publishing, 2000.
- Carol Ann Smith and Eugene F. Merz. *Moment by Moment: A Retreat in Everyday Life*. Notre Dame: Ave Marie Press, 2000.

PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT: As soon as you receive your books begin to:

1. Carefully read—chew and digest—the assigned texts. It is vitally important that you have this material well in hand when you come to the class. So, do not just read the books—eat them up—I have decided to give you a short required reading list in order to give you greater amounts of time to apply yourself specifically and totally to the books on the list
2. For each book prepare a paper making practical application to Spiritual Direction as one means of forming the human Soul and Spirit
3. Please note: I do not want book reports. I have already read the books and I know their content. What I want from you is your best thinking about how you might apply these learnings to your own ministry situations whether within your congregation or with people who come to you seeking Spiritual Direction outside your congregation, etc.
4. Having said this, I do not want you to feel overwhelmed by the pre-course assignment. What I want most of all from our time together is a journey in learning so that we may all become better equipped as Spiritual Formators of people who come to us seeking guidance for their lives lived before God
5. Be sure to bring your Bible, your journal and your *Guide to Prayer* to class.

GRADING PROCEDURE FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE:

50% based on classroom participation:

1. Not merely present but equipped to actively participate in classroom discussions- demonstrating your acumen of the course materials and the ability to apply the classroom materials/assignments to your learning
2. Demonstrate the ability to apply the pre-course reading/assignments to a real-world situation; i.e., your place of employment, your church, etc.
3. Demonstrate that you have read and comprehended the assigned readings.
4. Do not sign up for this class unless you fully intend to attend daily and participate in all class sessions.
5. Having said all of this, your final paper will reflect your classroom attendance.

50% of your total course grade will be based upon your work on the post-course assignment.

1. Use theory, practice and evaluation when writing your final research paper.
2. Turabian Writing Style is recommended when writing your final research paper unless your research calls for a different writing style.
3. Include an extended "Table of Content" with your final paper.
4. Include the following information on your final paper cover sheet:
 - Date the class was held
 - Date the paper is submitted for grading
 - Your email address
 - Your snail mail address.

POST -COURSE ASSIGNMENT:

The assignment will be given at the end of our five-day session together.

The course project is due in the D.Min office June 1, 2003. If you cannot complete it by that time, please fill out an extension form and send it to the D.Min office. Please be aware that extensions are not automatic.