

A MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF LANSING



Institute for Spiritual Direction

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THOUGHTS FROM FR. DAVID



Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. (Psalm 34:8)

Spiritual Directors naturally promote active participation of the faithful in the sacred liturgy through the exercise of the ISD method of incorporating lectionary-based Lectio Divina into every session. This is the highest call of the Spiritual Director. "...every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree." (SC 7)

The Vatican II fathers, through the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC) call the clergy and lay leadership to the promotion of liturgical instruction and active participation of the faithful. This is explicitly stated in chapter 14: "Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. This full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit."

Spiritual Directors have the solemn responsibility to carry forward this mission to all directees. I urge you to read the first two chapters of the SC – for inspiration, so you may inspire. May Goodness Abound in 2021!

Fr. David

A LOOK BACK

In September of 2020 we welcomed our fifth cohort to the Institute for Spiritual Direction. We are taking a look back to one of the members of the original class. She has her doctorate in Music Education and Music Therapy. We asked Dr. Barbara Hiranpradist to reflect on what she learned in her training at ISD that has stuck with her and helped her in her daily life five years later.

Like a great book, a profound personal relationship or an academic course can supply a new insight and momentum to navigate our world much differently. This statement reflects my feelings as I look back on my study of Spiritual Direction which began five years ago at the St. Francis Institute for Spiritual Direction.

My first observation was that the lens through which I had looked as I came into contact with people on a daily basis began to shift. As I worked with directees and felt confident engaging in conversations on topics such as prayer life, purgation, and the work of the Holy Spirit, I found that I was more freely discussing these issues on a day-to-day basis with family, friends, and colleagues. There was no way that this new perspective gained in my study of Spiritual Direction would fail to permeate my everyday philosophy.

Why is this significant? Spiritual Direction gives us the ammunition to evangelize through casual conversations and is not limited only to our directees. The Holy Spirit does not function just as a spigot which is turned off and on as we choose. When we are in tune with the Spirit in our mundane lives our opportunities to connect to human souls are endless. If we are open, the Holy Spirit is always at work in us. Thus the pearls of Spiritual Direction become woven into the fabric of our lives.

Dr. Barbara Hiranpradist
1st Cohort, ISD

IN OUR PARISHES

St. John the Evangelist Parish in Fenton, MI has recently taken big steps in support of allowing lay spiritual directors to serve in the parish. The pastor, Fr. Robert Copeland, has seen the interest in spiritual direction during these recent months of uncertainty in our society and health concerns as we all fight the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a growing interest in developing a deeper personal relationship with God and the Lord has abundantly provided a team to help meet this need. Spearheaded by Marie Drewek, a group of four trained directors have begun to meet and to make known the availability of their services to those who might be interested.

Marie Drewek and Linda Blondin are both graduates of the Institute for Spiritual Direction in Dewitt, MI. Nora Francis is a current student in this program, set to graduate in 2021. Marie Clements is a member of the parish who completed her training at The Cenacle of Our Lady of Divine Providence in Florida. They are also getting to know a Felician Sister, Sr. Bernadette Kapfer, from the Maryville Retreat Center in Holly. They are discussing the possibility of supporting the spiritual direction needs at the retreat house as well as having Sr. Bernadette support their work in the parish.

The parish has provided resources to support the work of this spiritual direction team. A new office has been prepared for their meetings and the parish bulletin has supported their service with an announcement explaining the reason for spiritual direction and helping curious parties to get in touch with one of the directors. Drewek explains that spiritual direction is always the action of the Holy Spirit. Each meeting begins with a prayer to the Holy Spirit asking for His presence and inspiration. Lectio Divina is an important component of the program, as they pray and discuss God's word, seeking to help those they direct to embrace God's Word more fully.

We thank God for this opportunity to help others draw closer to God in prayer.

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020!

Congratulations to the 15 members of Cohort 4 who graduated at a special Mass celebrated on December 16. This class had the special challenge of being affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The spring and fall semesters had to be converted to Zoom classes and with good cheer and strong zeal they "zoomed" their way to success. They are full of joy and eager to serve. Congratulations and God bless you in your ministry!



Fr. David with graduate, Rick Lewandowski



Fr. David with graduate, Olga De La Torre

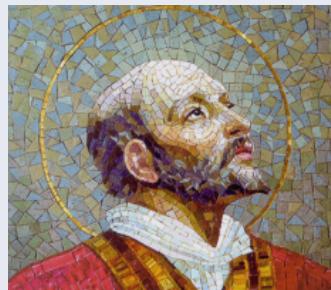
This is the Year to Open Those Bibles!

Bishop Boyea has invited all Catholics to join him in a great walk through salvation history as presented in Scripture. 2021 is the Bishop's Year of the Bible. Visit <https://www.dioceseofflansing.org/office-bishop/bishop-earl-boyea> to sign up.

Inspired by this initiative, The Institute for Spiritual Direction is sponsoring a weekly Scripture series for parishes. This series will provide support for parish groups to grow together in reading and meditating on God's Word. Check out the details at www.isdmichigan.org/byob.html.

How are you going to grow in your appreciation of God's Word in the year ahead?

SAINTLY INSPIRATION: IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA



O my God, teach me to be generous to serve you as you deserve to be served to give without counting the cost to fight without fear of being wounded to work without seeking rest and to spend myself without expecting any reward but the knowledge that I am doing your holy will. Amen

UPCOMING EVENTS

Retreats:

"Inspire and Light a Fire" based on the teaching of Bishop Robert Barron

- For Women: January 8-10, March 12-14
- For Men: January 15-17, February 12-14, March 5-7

Visit <http://www.stfrancis.ws/> for more information

A few words from our 2020 Graduating Class

I was looking for a chance to highlight some of our 2020 graduating seniors and to get a sampling of what has changed their hearts in the process of their training. So I randomly selected seven class members and asked them 4 different questions to see what they think about their service as spiritual directors. I was inspired and encouraged as I read their responses and I hope you will be too. Thanks to Rick Lewandowski, Olga De Latorre, Melissa Erickson, Joan Plumley, Lynn Korabik, Rick Freedberg, and Deacon Bob Nieman for taking part in the survey. I selected them randomly and they jumped at the opportunity to share. I won't identify anyone's specific answers, but will highlight the overall picture. I found it to be a remarkably consistent and faithful picture and overall they reflect so positively on the training they have embraced at ISD.

Question One: What have you learned that affected you most? How will it help you in your future spiritual direction ministry?

Across the board the most important thing mentioned was to rely on the power and leading of the Holy Spirit. They recognize how the Spirit moves each person in their own way and they recognize the beauty of the way He moves each one according to His will. Surrendering to the Spirit gives great freedom. God is able to bring out gifts in individuals that their director may never have considered. Freedom and joy came through every response as they recognized the power of the Spirit at work, transforming lives by His grace.

Question Two: Say something about Lectio Divina. Why is it important to you? How will this help you in your spiritual life and your life of ministry?

"Lectio Divina is a beautiful way to listen, reflect, pray, and self-empty to better hear what God is telling us through the Gospel." This thought was universally expressed. Reading Scripture was always important to people. But learning and practicing Lectio Divina has sent their appreciation of God's Word into orbit. They are finding much deeper insights, much strong inspiration, and much deeper peace. This appreciation of God's Word was not just to fulfil a class assignment. As one woman expressed it: "Lectio is for me an inexhaustible source of knowledge, and wisdom and the love of God for all his children and I will give my best effort to guide others to encounter this fountain."

Question Three: What helps you the most when you sit down with a directee and reach out to them to help them grow in their relationship with God?

There were many different thoughts expressed, which let me see the creativity, humility and deep faith of the respondents. Everyone recognizes that feeling when you sit down with a stranger at a retreat and wonder what can you offer in one hour. One person put their finger right on the most important thing. "I wouldn't consider directing someone without bookending with prayers." In some way each respondent recognized the importance of prayer throughout every conversation.

They also recognized the need for active listening, humility, and self-emptying. Establishing a trusting rapport is key and all these things come through a posture of active prayer and relying on the Holy Spirit.

Question Four: What saint has inspired you in serving as a spiritual director? Why?

We love our saints and people are inspired for a variety of reasons. St. Teresa of Avila was noted for her wisdom and simplicity. Franciscan saints inspired some because of their long time connection to that spirituality. Both St. Francis and Solanus Casey were mentioned as strong influencers. "They both had deep relationships with our God that completely infused their lives and ministry." St. John of the Cross was noted as a true spiritual giant who helps us find God's radiant light in the midst of our struggles as we walk the pilgrim's way of the Cross. Finally, St. Benedict was noted for the simplicity and wisdom of his rule. In good times and in bad, the rule continues to keep us on the path.

My favorite response to all these questions came in response to this question. When asked who his favorite saint was in regard to spiritual direction one respondent's first reply was "St. Fr. David Rosenberg". He did note the distinction between Fr. David and canonized saints. But I think he speaks for all of us when he noted "St. Fr. David's" encouragement to take the classes and pursue this ministry." He was noted to be particularly inspiring to this respondent. So, on behalf of all the graduates of this program, thank you St. Fr. David Rosenberg for your vision, your hard work, your encouragement and your prayers for us all. God is glorified through your work and your example.



For more information on the Institute for Spiritual Direction, on how to become a spiritual director, or how to find a spiritual director, please visit www.isdmichigan.org, or email Fr. David Rosenberg at drosenberg@isdmichigan.org.