

## **What is Spiritual Direction?**

Spiritual direction — also known as spiritual companionship or spiritual accompaniment — is a process of cultivating a deeper relationship with God through an ongoing conversation, of reflecting on your spiritual journey, with a companion — a spiritual director, guide, or “soul friend” to use the lovely Celtic term for this kind of ministry.

A spiritual director is essentially a co-listener, who helps you to listen for the movement of God’s spirit in ordinary rhythms of your everyday life. Ignatius of Loyola held that the “Creator communicates directly with the creature.” This means we can hear the voice of the Divine through the movements of our soul, and the feelings and experiences we have. A spiritual director helps the directee sift through all these things, paying attention to where the Spirit might be present and active. A good director essentially holds up a mirror before their directees, helping them be more reflective on the ways God is active in their life. Sometimes a director may point out something of the Divine in the directee’s story that the directee was not aware of. Direction may also include an exploration of prayer, one’s deep desires and longings in life, a discovery of ways to deepen one’s relationship with the Spirit, or insight into a prayerful discernment of life’s important decisions.

## **What Spiritual Direction is Not**

Since spirituality can impact all of a person’s life, the conversation can be wide ranging and can touch on a variety of matters. It’s important to keep in mind, however, that spiritual direction is not the same thing as other forms of interactive care, like psychotherapy or life coaching — the focus of spiritual direction is always the nurture of one’s spiritual life and intimacy with God. Therefore, spiritual direction often will pay special attention to topics such as prayer, meditation, contemplative and mystical practices, religious observance (including conflict with religion), ministry and care for others, the teachings of the great mystics and saints of the past, and how to integrate all of the above into a meaningful and joyful life, lived in response to the love of God.

Some people may benefit from both therapy and spiritual direction, but please keep in mind spiritual direction’s focus is on your relationship with God in the context of your life.

A spiritual director is not a guru or spiritual master. Their role is not to tell you how to live your faith life or to speak for God. The director’s role is to listen and discern with you for God’s presence in your life and to ask questions that can help you better notice the ways God is active in your life. While your spiritual director may offer suggestions for you to apply to your spiritual life, it is always up to you to ultimately discern what is best for your unique spiritual walk — your one-of-a-kind relationship with the Divine.

## **About Spiritual Direction with Carl McColman**

Thank you for your interest in spiritual direction! Receiving spiritual direction continues to be one of the most important aspects of my own ongoing spiritual journey, so I am pleased to offer this ministry to you. Spiritual direction has a long history in Christian spirituality, and similar forms of mentoring, guidance and accompaniment can be found in all the world's great contemplative traditions. I invite you to approach spiritual direction as a gift you give yourself — an investment of time, energy and prayer into the adventure of growing closer to God and seeking to express God's love and will in your life.

The Christian tradition regards the ultimate spiritual director is the Holy Spirit, who we can find in our hearts (Romans 5:5). My commitment is to accompany you as you seek to listen to the Spirit's movement in your life. I consider it an honor and a joy to do so.

## **Concerning Language and Faith Tradition**

My formation (training) as a spiritual director comes out of the contemplative Christian tradition, and so my language and culture draws primarily from the Christian tradition. I recognize that traditional Christian language can be difficult even for practicing Christians, so I am comfortable speaking about God/Spirit using inclusive and expansive language and imagery. I also enjoy working with sincere seekers of all faith traditions or without any religious affiliation. As a spiritual director I hope to support you in your unique journey of deepening spiritual growth and intimacy with the Divine, in whatever form that takes.

## **Confidentiality**

Spiritual direction is a practice held in sacred confidence. I will not reveal your identity, or the content of our conversations, to anyone unless I am required to do so by law or court order, or unless there is a concern of harm to yourself or others. You are free to share the details of our conversations with others or not, as you see fit.

## **Practical Concerns**

The requested fee for Spiritual Direction is on a sliding scale, \$100 to \$150 per session. I accept cash, check, charge, Zelle or Venmo.

I can meet with directees in Metro Atlanta at the Ignatius House Retreat Center or at St. Thomas More Catholic Church. I am also glad to meet with directees via phone or Zoom.

We will meet for up to an hour per session (typically once per month) with a commitment to begin and end our sessions on time. If you need to change your appointment, please let me know in advance by emailing, texting or calling me.