

## Training the Next Generation of Spiritual Directors:

### Outline of Content and Competencies To Be Covered in Training Spiritual Directors

- I. The Believer's Position in Christ and the Nature of Sanctification in the New Testament
  - a. Review of Biblical terms and their meaning (e.g. *teleios*)
  - b. The theological virtues: Faith, hope and love
  - c. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord (reverence)
    - i. Discussion of Is.11:2-3 with comment of Justin Martyr
  - d. The supernatural working of the Spirit and the nine fruit of the Spirit
  - e. Toward a definition of Christian maturity
  
- II. Repentance
  - a. The role of the Holy Spirit in conviction of sin
  - b. Contrition vs. attrition and how the difference may be discerned in pastoral care/spiritual direction.
  
- III. Confession of sins – public and private
  - a. Helping people work through the process of confessing their sins and helping the penitent arrive at discernment ("a properly formed conscience," as opposed to misplaced guilt, shame or scrupulousness)
    - i. Discerning depression
      1. How depression affects discernment, confession of sins and the receiving of absolution
      2. How to discern when a penitent may be a danger to himself/herself or others
    - ii. Discerning bondage to anger
      1. How to speak with and interview an angry penitent
      2. Dealing with evasion and resistance in confession of sins
  - b. The identification and discernment of root sins that support, enable and give power to further patterns of sinful behavior.
    - i. Evagrius and Cassian on the eight evil reasonings
    - ii. Gregory the Great on the seven deadly sins
    - iii. Healthy and unhealthy patterns of introspection and self-examination: The examen
    - iv. Spiritual warfare
      1. The psychology of temptation
      2. Patterns of temptation
      3. How to discern flesh/spirit dynamics
      4. How to respond different patterns of temptation and spiritual assault

- c. The transforming pardon and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: Pronouncing the words of absolution and how to give an edifying parting meditation
  - d. Confidentiality and keeping secrets—when this is necessary and when this is wrong
- IV. Spiritual friendship and spiritual direction
- a. The difference between them and how each is best understood (their respective roles in the Christian life)
  - b. Intimacy in spiritual relationships
    - i. Holy love and carnal love, how the former readily becomes the latter, and the signs characteristic of each (Discussion of Walter Hilton)
  - c. Power dynamics in spiritual relationships
- V. Developing a rule of life
- a. Meditation on Scripture
    - i. Stages of entering into prayer and setting one's affection on Christ
      - 1. Anthem prayers
      - 2. Meditation upon Christ's self-humbling in the Incarnation
        - a. Meditation during Advent and the Christmas season
        - b. Humility in the life of Christ and in the life of the Christian—Biblical teaching and
      - 3. Meditation upon Christ in his suffering
        - a. Luther on right and wrong ways of meditating on Christ in his suffering
        - b. Meditation before receiving the Lord's Supper and the Church's teaching on frequent communion
        - c. Meditation during Lent
    - ii. Lectio divina: The use of the Bible in contemplative prayer
  - b. Prayer
    - i. Biblical teaching on nature and necessity of personal prayer
    - ii. Prayer for local and world evangelization (concerts of prayer)
    - iii. Supporting the pastor/clergy of your church with prayer—its necessity and some best practices
    - iv. Prayer for the renewal of the church
    - v. How to pray for others
      - 1. Prayer for healing
      - 2. Blessing
  - c. Fasting
  - d. Prayer vigils
  - e. Journaling
  - f. The spiritual senses, with a discussion of the criteria for discernment of spirits
  - g. Abandonment to divine providence—its true meaning and some common misunderstandings

- VI. How to plan regularly scheduled prayer retreats and how to get the most out of your time away.
  - a. Benefits and dangers of solitude
  - b. How to plan regularly scheduled prayer retreats
  - c. How to get the most out of your time away
  
- VII. Patterns of spiritual renewal in ministry
  - a. Spiritual aspects of work, time management and burnout
    - i. Examining our models of what counts as success
    - ii. When does our desire to be respected by others and to meet or exceed their standards become a “fear of man” that takes away from the fear of God and is destructive to oneself and others?--Some principles for discernment (Discussion of Segundo Galilea, *Temptation and Discernment* and some case studies)
  
- VIII. Spiritual formation in the local congregation
  - a. Teaching and modeling biblical patterns of conflict resolution
  - b. Teaching and modeling biblical patterns of praying for children and teaching the faith to them