

Ethical Standards and Guidelines of the Catholic Spiritual Directors

A Catholic spiritual director's ethical and moral conduct, as a member in the Mystical Body of Christ within His Church, is expressed through one's daily personal and ministerial encounters and has its foundations rooted in one's ascent and faithfulness to the magisterial teachings and Traditions of the Catholic Church. Those who seek to be registered as a Site Member agree to the following guidelines.

Personal and Professional Ministry Guiding Standards

In our personal spiritual formation, we seek to:

- Live a life of prayer, both personal and communal.
- Remain to be fully initiated in the Roman Catholic faith in good standing.
- Participate in regular spiritual direction.
- Make an annual silent retreat.

In our personal and ministry intellectual formation, we seek:

- Ongoing formation and study of Scripture and the Church's teachings in addition to theology, spirituality, psychology, and other disciplines related to spiritual direction and spiritual growth (theology of the Trinity, of Christ, of Salvation, of morality, and of the Church).
- Ongoing discernment in our call to the ministry of spiritual direction.
- Inquiry into the influences of the secular culture, the social-historical context, environmental setting, and institutions on ourselves and our directees.

In our professional preparation and formation, we seek:

- To receive regular supervision from a mentor or engage in peer-to-peer or peer group. • Ongoing training in pastoral care and being aware of our limits.

In the practice of spiritual direction and accompaniment, we:

- Observe standard professional boundaries regarding relationships, setting, place, content, and other related areas.
- Strictly observe confidentiality (as limited by mandated reporting laws).
- Consult and refer to others in ministry or clinical professionals when we encounter areas of unfamiliarity or emotional or psychological disorders beyond our role.

The Spiritual Director and the Spiritual Directee Relationship begins in the Trinitarian Covenant Our relationship between director and directee models love between the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, for we are members of the mystical body of Christ within the Church.

In servicing others, we offer our directees information on the following:

- The nature of spiritual direction – what it is and what it is not
- The roles and responsibilities of the spiritual director and the spiritual directee
- The length and frequency of spiritual direction sessions
- The compensation and stipends
- A process for evaluating and terminating the relationship

In our relationships, rooted in the dignity of the person, for we are made in the image and the likeness of God, we:

- Acknowledge and respect the directee's freedom of conscience, faith, understanding, tradition, theology, spirituality, values, culture, autonomy, and abilities as we meet them where they are, while directing them under the guide of the Holy Spirit towards Christ.
- Inquire only as necessary on what is related to their prayer life.

Our ministerial ethics reflect the covenant relationship between God and oneself and the directee by:

- Establishing and maintaining appropriate physical and psychological boundaries • Being aware of the following:
 - Any intimacy that may develop in such a relationship and avoid any potential for disordered affections of the directee or of the director by the directee.
 - Any developments towards an imbalance in the relationship – leading to a perceived or a real use of ‘power over.’
 - Any words or actions which would foster dependency.
 - Any actions that would be deemed sinful.
 - Avoid dual relationships with directees to the extent possible to avoid any interference in the spiritual direction relationship.

In keeping confidentiality, we seek to:

- Protect the identity of the spiritual directee, maintaining anonymity in discussions with supervisors and in a peer group setting.
- Keep confidential all oral, electronic, and written matters arising in the spiritual direction sessions. • Recognize and disclose to the spiritual directee the limitations of confidentiality of electronic communications.
- Conduct spiritual direction sessions in environments allowing for private and confidential conversations.
- Share with the directee legal regulations requiring disclosure within their region - without their consent - to proper authorities, including but not limited to cases of child, vulnerable persons or elder abuse; or physical harm to self and others – for the protection of life (suicidality or homicidality).

With spiritual director colleagues and others in ministry or the helping professions we seek to:

- Develop interdisciplinary relationships.
- Suggest the directee who is in therapy to inform his or her therapist about being in spiritual direction.
- Secure written release information from the directee when asked by the directee to provide specific information to others in ministry or other fields of the directee’s care.

Those individuals who seek to be registered as site members of the Registry of CatholicSD.org agree with and commit to follow these guidelines.

Keep in your File: Name

Signature

Date