



CATHOLIC
SPIRITUAL
DIRECTORS

Ethical Standards and Guidelines of the Catholic Spiritual Directors' Registry

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 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 of CatholicSpiritualDirectors.com agree with and commit 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 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.
- Insights into the influences of the secular culture, our 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 basic pastoral counseling skills and being aware of our limits.
- Continuing education/formation through participating in conferences, formal courses, workshops, or other structured programs on spiritual ministry.

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; and
- our process for evaluating and terminating the relationship.

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

- Acknowledge the directee's conscience, faith understanding, tradition, theology, spirituality, values, culture, autonomy, freedom, 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.

In our ministerial ethics and morals 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 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 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.
- Address to the directee their country's or state's legal regulations requiring disclosure without their consent to proper authorities, including but not limited to child abuse, incompetent persons or elder abuse, and physical harm to self and others - the protection of life (suicidality or homicidality).

With spiritual director colleagues and others in ministry, we seek to:

- Develop interdisciplinary relationships.
- Request the directee who is in therapy to inform his or her therapist about being in spiritual direction.
- Secure written release information from spiritual directees when specific information needs to be shared for the benefit of the spiritual directee and to whom, such as ministers, clergy, spiritual care providers, and other professionals, and collaborating when asked by the directee.

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

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