



CATHOLIC  
SPIRITUAL  
DIRECTORS

## **Ethical Standards and Guidelines for The Catholic Spiritual Directors' Registry**

A Catholic spiritual director's ethical conduct is rooted in the commandments given to us by God as in Scripture and the within the Tradition and teachings of the Catholic Church.

### **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:**

- To continue to 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.
- 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 other 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.
- our process for evaluating and terminating the relationship.

### **Relationships 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.
- We inquire only as necessary on what is related to their prayer life.

### **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.
  - 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 intra and 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 follow the above personal and professional guidelines and the ethical, moral, and social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.**