

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Module One



Episcopal Diocese of Florida

Deacon School

For 2021-2022 class

Opening Reflection

Reflect on these words prior to beginning this module and again when you complete all assignments.

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



The Book of Common Prayer p. 832

Spiritual Discipline Mentor

Understanding and paying attention to your spiritual life and well-being is extremely important during your formation. While there is no designated class day for this module, staying in touch with the mentor for as a guide for establishing your spiritual discipline is required and will be critical to your growth and development.

Objectives

After completing this module, the Postulant will be able to:

- ✓ Assess and articulate the importance of a life focused on wholeness – wellness in body, mind and spirit;
- ✓ Develop a personal spiritual discipline; and
- ✓ Value importance on-going life-long Spiritual Direction.

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction is important during your journey and throughout your ministry. In seeking a Spiritual Director, please be open to working with an Episcopalian. More information regarding Spiritual Direction is enclosed. The Diocese does not assign or recommend Spiritual Directors, however, some known Spiritual Directors will be provided as a handout and guide.

Required Reading

Palmer, Parker, *Let Your Life Speak, Listening for the Voice of Vocation*: San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

With wisdom, compassion, and gentle humor, Parker J. Palmer invites us to listen to the inner teacher and follow its leadings toward a sense of meaning and purpose. Telling stories from his own life and the lives of others who have made a difference, Palmer shares insights gained from darkness and depression as well as fulfillment and joy, illuminating a pathway toward vocation for all who seek the true calling of their lives.

Roth, Nancy, *Spiritual Exercises: Joining Body and Spirit in Prayer*: New York, NY: Church Publishing, Inc., 2005.

Nancy Roth offers a rationale and overview of contemporary prayer practices that prepare the soul in the here and now using a variety of exercises that honor the link between "body" and spirit" and lead the body to express itself in prayer.

Stoner, Scott, *Your Living Compass, Living Well in Thought, Word and Deed*: New York, NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2014.

Living Compass is a church-based faith and wellness program designed for individuals and small groups. Readers engage in a 10-week, self-guided wellness retreat, consisting of daily ten-minute readings, plus small, meaningful action steps designed to get your life, your relationships, and your work headed in a new direction. Deeply spiritual and exceedingly practical, this book has become yet another resource of the national Living Compass network, which includes a website, workshop series, wellness resources (including a free Living Well with Living Compass app) and social media.

Book Report Options – Choose One:

Manning, Brennan, *The Wisdom of Tenderness: What Happens When God's Fierce Mercy Transforms Our Lives*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2004.

Manning writes that all changes in the quality of a person's life must grow out of a change in that person's vision of reality. He argues that by relating to God as the heart of tenderness, we can begin to develop a spiritual life that lets go of worry, stops organizing everything as means to an end, and begins to live fully in the awareness of God's infinite grace and mercy in each moment. By accepting the tenderness of God, our hearts will begin to open, our minds can discern truth, and we can more readily see the Divine in others.

Goff, Bob, *Everybody, Always: Becoming Love in a World Full of Setbacks and Difficult People*: Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2018.

Goff takes readers on a journey into the secret of living without fear, constraint, or worry. The path toward the liberated existence we all long for is found in a truth as simple to say as it is hard to do: love people, even the difficult ones, without distinction and without limits. Driven by Bob's trademark storytelling, *Everybody, Always* reveals the lessons Bob learned – often the hard way--about what it means to love without inhibition, insecurity, or restriction.

Nouwen, Henri J.M., *Reaching Out*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1975.

Nouwen lays out a perceptive and insightful plan for living a spiritual life and achieving the ultimate goal of that life – union with God. "It does not offer answers or solutions", Nouwen said, "but is written in the conviction that the quest for an authentic Christian spirituality is worth the effort..."

Supplementary Resources

Bass, Dorothy C. (ed.), *Practicing Our Faith: a Way of Life for a Searching People*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Theologians and educators from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds explore twelve vital ways to apply Christian tradition and practice to everyday life.

Borg, Marcus, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 2003.

Borg explores what it means to be a Christian today and explains how we can practice the timeless elements of Christian faith in today's world.

Chittister, Joan, *In the Heart of the Temple*, Chicago, IL: Blue Bridge, 2004.

Chittister, a Benedictine nun, addresses such subjects as stewardship, prophecy, equality and discipleship. She also writes about contemplation, simplicity and Sabbath-keeping, offering her Benedictine religious community's way of life as an antidote to the frenetic pace of modern living.

Guenther, Margaret, *Holy Listening: Art of Spiritual Direction*: Lanham, MD: Cowley Publications, 1992.

Guenther uses the images of the spiritual director as host, teacher, and midwife to describe the ministry of spiritual direction today. She pays particular attention to spiritual direction for women, and addresses such down-to-earth questions as setting, time, and privacy. Her stories of real people bring the practice of spiritual direction alive.

Guenther, Margaret, *The Practice of Prayer: The New Church's Teaching Series, Volume Four*: Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1998.

Guenther covers the essentials of prayer, answering many of the common questions about the spiritual life, including practical descriptions of a number of ways Christians have prayed through the centuries.

Holmes, Urban, *A History of Christian Spirituality*, Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002.

This modern classic introduces the key concepts and people who have shaped our Christian spiritual heritage. Holmes begins with the Jewish antecedents, and proceeds through the New Testament period, monasticism, the Middle Ages, Byzantine spirituality, and the modern period. He ends his overview with key contemporary figures such as Simone Weil, Thomas Merton, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Holtz, Albert, *Pilgrim Roads, A Benedictine Journey Through Lent*, Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2006.

Benedictine monk Albert Holtz explores the Lenten journey through meditations written while on a fifteen-country pilgrimage during a sabbatical year. At the heart of each reflection is a lesson about our inner spiritual journey.

Keating, Thomas, *An Invitation to Love: The Way of Christian Contemplation*, Contemplative Outreach, 1992.

Keating, a well-known Trappist priest and retreat leader, provides an excellent, basic introduction to contemporary contemplative practice in ordinary life. He integrates classic Christian teaching with 20th-century psychology, offering meditation as spiritual therapy.

Koenig, John, *Rediscovering New Testament Prayer: Boldness and Blessing in the Name of Jesus*, Wipf & Stock Publishers, April 2004.

Koenig presents a rich variety of prayer practices that reflects the real prayer experience of Christ and his first followers. Recapturing the earliest believers' extraordinary encounters with the Holy, Koenig offers prayer as instruction for the mind, renewal of the spirit, and help in effecting positive change in one's life.

Nouwen, Henri J.M., *The Wounded Healer*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1972.

Nouwen is ahead of his time when he writes about post moderns (whom he calls "nuclear man"). Nouwen asserts that all who minister are called to identify the suffering in their own hearts and make that recognition the starting point of their service.

Sedgwick, Timothy F, *The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.

Sedgwick shows readers that faithful moral living is achieved through daily "practices

of piety” such as prayer, worship, self-examination, simplicity and hospitality. He explores both Catholic and Protestant foundations of Christian ethics and asserts that Christianity is meant to be lived in relationship with others.

Shori, Katharine Jefferts, *On A Wing and a Prayer*, Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing 2007. Jefferts Schori, the oceanographer-turned-priest who was elected in 2006 as the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the USA offers musings on faith, diversity, and the church’s fight for justice in the world. Jefferts Schori addresses issues like social justice, the deep love of God, the need for interfaith understanding, and the responsibility of all baptized persons to participate in ministry.

Taylor, Barbara Brown, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*, New York, NY: HarperOne, 2009.

Taylor is one of those rare people who truly can see the holy in everything. She mines the potentially sacred meaning of simple daily activities and conditions, like walking, paying attention, and saying no to work one Sabbath day each week.

Thompson, Marjorie, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Life*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.

Thompson offers both a framework for understanding the spiritual disciplines and instruction for developing and nurturing those practices.

Wolman, Richard N., *Thinking with Your Soul: Spiritual Intelligence and Why it Matters*. New York, NY: Harmony Books, 2001.

Dr. Wolman is a clinical psychologist on the faculty of Harvard Medical School. His groundbreaking system for evaluating the levels and areas of spirituality in people's lives without reference to a specific religious ideology is presented in this book. This book includes an opportunity to take the PSI and examine the resulting profile of your spiritual energy and awareness.

Stephen, OSH Sister Ellen and Doug Shadel, *Vessel of Peace: A Guide for Pilgrims of the Spirit* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007 ISBN: 978-0-687-64255-7

The Voyage Towards Spiritual Freedom is a dialogue between a spiritual seeker and a master of contemplative thought about how to empty oneself of cultural myths that stress us out and replace them with spiritual truths that enable us to live a life of deep meaning and fulfillment.

On-line Resources

Spiritual Director’s International is a helpful resource: <http://www.sdiworld.org>

The brothers of St John the Evangelist offer helpful resources on a rule of life as well as other spirituality practices: <http://www.ssje.org>.

Living Compass resources: <http://www.livingcompass.org>

Mepkin Abbey is a Trappist Monastery located in South Carolina. They offer spiritual practice support, written reflections, on-line centering prayer as well as retreats. <https://mepkinabbey.org>

Diaconal Formation Book Report Form

Name _____

Date _____

Book Title _____

1. What were the key ideas in the book?
2. What ideas/concepts were of particular interest to you? Where was your energy the highest? What excited you?
3. How will I use this information in my own personal spiritual life?

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION QUESTIONS

Questions to Ask Self

1. What is the value of having a Spiritual Director?
2. Where is God in your search for spiritual direction at this time in your life?
3. If you have been in spiritual direction before, consider what you gained from that spiritual direction and if at this point in your journey, you are looking for something different or something similar.
4. Do you have a gender preference for your spiritual director?
5. Do you have a preference for a particular orientation (Benedictine, Ignatian, etc.)?

Note: The Diocese does not refer or recommend spiritual directors but offers a bridge of information to help someone searching for a spiritual director continue his/her search for a good fit. God makes the match, and we assist in the process. The website of the Spiritual Direction International (SDI) organization is a good resource.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION QUESTIONS

Questions to Ask a Prospective Spiritual Director

1. How do you understand or define spiritual direction? What is your experience as a spiritual director? For how many years? In what settings/environments?
2. What are you most interested in spiritually?
3. What kind of formation or training have you received? What enrichment, spiritual formation and theological education do you have in spiritual direction?
4. What is the most important thing you bring to spiritual direction?
5. How do you tend to your own prayer, meditation and contemplative life?
6. Do you pursue continuing education and supervision for your spiritual direction ministry? If so, how?
7. Do you commit to an ethical practice of spiritual direction, such as abiding by the Spiritual Director's International Guidelines of Ethical Conduct?
https://www.sdiworld.org/sites/default/files/resources/Guidelines%20for%20Ethical%20Conduct%20Flip/guidelines_ethical_conduct.html
8. What do you charge for Spiritual Direction?

Note: The Diocese does not refer or recommend spiritual directors but offers a bridge of information to help someone searching for a spiritual director continue his/her search for a good fit. God makes the match, and we assist in the process. The website of the Spiritual Direction International (SDI) organization is a good resource.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MODULE 1 – SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Mentor: The Rev. Ronnie Willerer

- 1) It is important to establish a relationship with your Module One mentor that will last throughout your formation process. You are required but not limited to making personal contact with your mentor at least two times during your process. It is your responsibility to make contact and schedule these meetings with your mentor. (Note: more than 2 conversations are welcomed, if you desire or need.)
- 2) This module's required reading is designed to guide you spiritually and help in the formulation of a life focused on wholeness.
 - a) Read the Palmer book and be prepared to discuss it at the initial, in person meeting with the Module One Mentor.
 - b) Read the Stoner book and do the self-guided retreat described in the book. (You may opt to do the retreat by yourself, with another person or with a group.) Then write a reflection on:
 - 1) Describe how you conducted the retreat (i.e. self, group, daily, weekly)
 - 2) Which part(s) of the wellness compass affirmed your self-awareness and which surprised you?
 - 3) Which part of the wellness compass was most useful and how will you carry this compass into your future?
 - c) Using the Roth book, choose one discipline from each of chapters 2, 3 & 4 and write a one-page reflection on your experience describing:
 - 1) Setting (i.e. home, church, private, group, etc....)
 - 2) Why you chose the particular discipline
 - 3) Any challenges
 - 4) Experienced benefits
 - 5) Any other spiritual insights
 - d) Choose one book from the Book Report Options and write a report using the Book Report Form. The other two books will be considered recommended.
 - e) Discuss these assignments with your Module One mentor.
- 3) If you do not already have a Spiritual Director, talk with your Module 1 mentor about how to approach this process. In prayerfully seeking names of active spiritual directors, ask your mentor, clergy, and staff at retreat centers/religious institutions about spiritual directors in your area. Establish and/or continue a relationship with a Spiritual Director throughout your formation process. The name of your Spiritual Director should be shared with your Module One mentor and the Archdeacon.
- 4) **SYNTHESIS** – Sometime after the formation midpoint, after spending some time in spiritual direction, reflect on your experience with Spiritual Direction. How has this discipline impacted you spiritually and has its impact spread to other areas of your life? Consider the following questions and discuss with your mentor:
 - a) What were you initially seeking from Spiritual Direction?
 - b) What does Spiritual Direction mean to you now?
 - c) Is your current Spiritual Director the right one for you, or do you need to consider a change?
 - d) Do you need to reconsider your Spiritual Direction plan and objectives?

Module One Evaluation

Spiritual Discipline

Postulant: _____

The mentor assess the Postulant's work on each assignment in the module. The mentor will document on this form, whether the assignment was completed satisfactorily. The mentor may add additional comments if desired. If the assignment is not completed satisfactorily, the mentor must add comments regarding the deficiencies. The mentor will review the evaluation with the Postulant and the Deacon School Co-facilitators.

	Assignment	Complete/Incomplete
1	<p>It is important to establish a relationship with your Module One mentor that will last throughout your formation process. You are required but not limited to making personal contact with your mentor at least two times during your process. <u>It is your responsibility to make contact and schedule these meetings with your mentor.</u> (Note: more than 2 conversations are welcomed, if you desire or need.)</p>	
2	<p>This module's required reading is designed to guide you spiritually and help in the formulation of a life focused on wholeness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Read the Palmer book and be prepared to discuss it at the initial, in person meeting with the Module One Mentor. b) Read the Stoner book and do the self-guided retreat described in the book. (You may opt to do the retreat by yourself, with another person or with a group.) Then write a reflection on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Describe how you conducted the retreat (i.e. self, group, daily, weekly) 2) Which part(s) of the wellness compass affirmed your self-awareness and which surprised you? 3) Which part of the wellness compass was most useful and how will you carry this compass into your future? c) Using the Roth book, choose one discipline from each of chapters 2, 3 & 4 and write a one-page reflection on your experience describing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Setting (i.e. home, church, private, group, etc....) 2) Why you chose the particular discipline 3) Any challenges 4) Experienced benefits 5) Any other spiritual insights d) Choose one book from the Book Report Options and 	

	<p>write a report using the Book Report Form. The other two books will be considered recommended.</p> <p>e) Discuss these assignments with your Module One mentor.</p>	
3	<p>If you do not already have a Spiritual Director, talk with your mentor about how to approach this process. In prayerfully seeking names of active spiritual directors, ask your mentor, clergy, and staff at retreat centers / religious institutions about spiritual directors in your area. In seeking a spiritual director, please be open to working with an Episcopalian. More information regarding spiritual direction is enclosed. The Diocese does not assign or recommend spiritual directors, however, some known Spiritual Directors will be provided as a handout and guide. The name of your Spiritual Director should be shared with your Module One mentor and the Archdeacon.</p>	
4	<p>Establish and /or continue a relationship with a Spiritual Director. This relationship should be maintained throughout your formation process. Spiritual Direction is important throughout your ministry.</p>	
5	<p>SYNTHESIS – Sometime after the formation midpoint, after spending some time in spiritual direction, reflect on your experience with Spiritual Direction. How has this discipline impacted you spiritually and has its impact spread to other areas of your life? Consider the following questions and discuss with your mentor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) What were you initially seeking from Spiritual Direction? b) What does Spiritual Direction mean to you now? c) Is your current Spiritual Director the right one for you, or do you need to consider a change? d) Do you need to reconsider your Spiritual Direction plan and objectives? 	

Signatures:

Mentor:

Postulant:

Date: _____

Date: _____