

## **Spiritual Direction in the Ignatian tradition**

*Spiritual direction is help given by one Christian to another, which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.* William Barry SJ



### **Spiritual Direction in the Parishes of Our Lady of the Way**

Individual spiritual direction is a foundational ministry of Ignatian spirituality. It has traditionally been practised by ordained clergy alone and of course the Jesuit priests of our parishes are active in this quiet ministry. In recent years, however, this practice of giving spiritual direction has widened to embrace the spiritual gifts and call of non-ordained persons as well.

In the OLW parish community we are fortunate to have several trained spiritual directors who have been formed in the Ignatian tradition and other Christian traditions of accompaniment.

If you would like to meet with a Spiritual Director, you are welcome to approach Frances Tilly at the Parish office for the names of qualified spiritual directors who work in this ministry in the parishes of Our Lady of the Way. **Frances Tilly 8918 4104, [francest@sjparishnsw.org.au](mailto:francest@sjparishnsw.org.au)**

#### **Other Local Links for Spiritual Direction**

##### **Canisius Centre of Ignatian Spirituality**

102 Mona Vale Road, Pymble NSW 2073

Tel: 02 9488 4524 email: [canisius@cis.jesuit.org.au](mailto:canisius@cis.jesuit.org.au)

<http://www.canisiusspirituality.org.au>

<http://www.csdaust.com/index.html>

##### **The national Centres of Ignatian Spirituality**

[www.cis.jesuit.org.au](http://www.cis.jesuit.org.au)

The following excerpts are from the Australian Centres for Ignatian spirituality leaflet on Spiritual Direction.

### **Seeking Spiritual Direction**

The most intimate and precious conversations we may have in our life might be about our relationship with God. When we seek to explore this relationship, in all its power and fragility, we may seek spiritual direction to help us grow in intimacy with God.

Spiritual direction is really not about being directed: rather, it is very much about being encouraged to draw closer to God. It is a conversation.

A skilled spiritual director, working one-to-one with an individual, can assist the person to pay attention to how God is communicating with them.



Luke 24:13-35

### **Noticing the moment of truth: Desires**

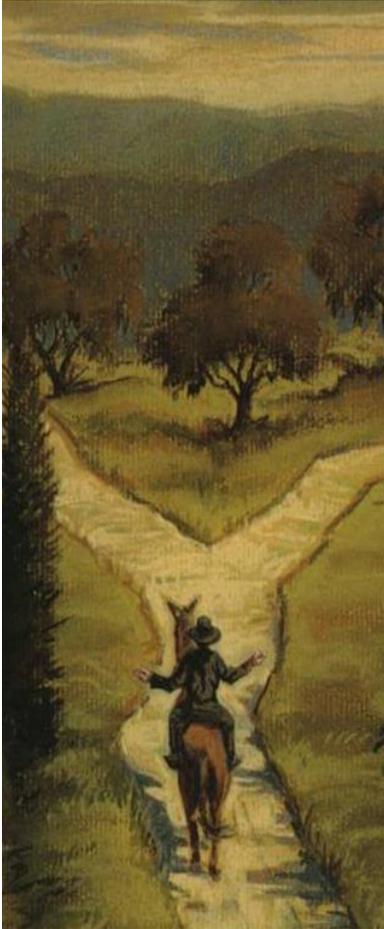
Spiritual direction in the Ignatian tradition assists people in understanding their deepest desires. Often the deepest desire of our hearts cannot be expressed in words. It may, however, find eloquent expression in what we choose to do and in how we spend our energy.

How do we come to know our deepest desires?

*When we speak of the deepest desire, we are referring to what is deep in the core of our being—that part of us where God's dream for us is being shaped. This kind of desiring lies far, far deeper than the list of wants and wishes that we might identify at the more superficial levels of our being. For those whose hearts are, deep down, directed towards God, however they understand God, the deepest desire will be in tune with God's dream for them, and for all creation.*

Margaret Silf, [Companions of Christ: Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living](#)





## **Finding our purpose in life: Discernment**

Spiritual direction in the Ignatian tradition fosters discernment. This is more than just decision-making, it is a process of making good life choices based in faith. Through discernment, we see where God is calling us to serve in the world.

## **Starting where you are**

Ignatian spiritual direction facilitates a person's growth in their faith journey. It is personal, flexible, and 'starts where you are! People come to spiritual direction for many reasons, all of which are respected and treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

## **What Spiritual Direction Is Not**

Spiritual direction is not counseling.

Spiritual direction is not therapy.

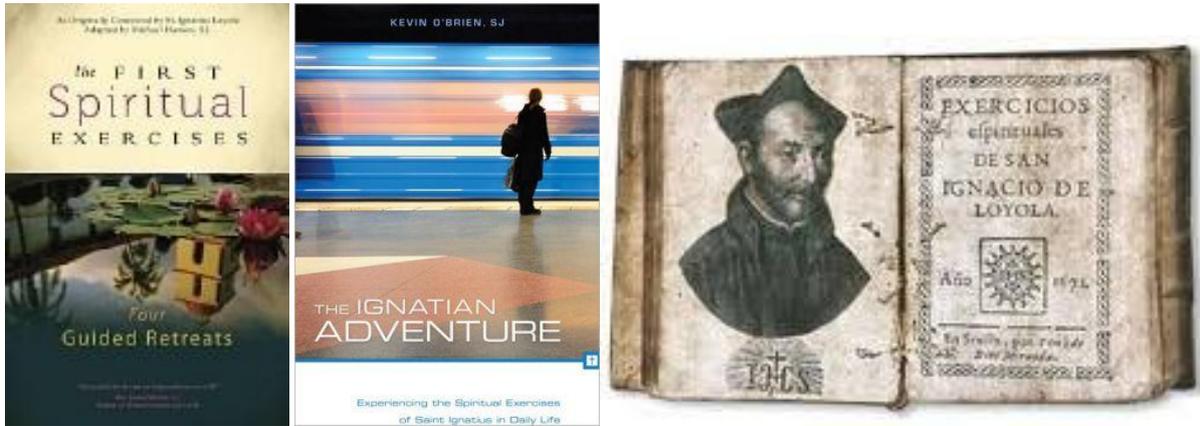
Spiritual direction is not financial advice.

While it may be appropriate at times to discuss personal and relational struggles in the context of spiritual direction, a spiritual director is not a psychotherapist, nor does the spiritual director provide such services. Similarly, you may discuss financial issues in spiritual direction, but a spiritual director does not offer financial advice and any decisions and actions you may take in that regard are done without advice or recommendation, and are purely your responsibility.

<http://www.sdiworld.org/>

## What Is Distinctive about Ignatian Spiritual Direction?

Spiritual direction is a feature of many Christian traditions. In fact, forms of spiritual direction are found in all religions. What distinguishes Ignatian spiritual direction from other approaches?



**A theological vision rooted in the Spiritual Exercises.** The theology of the Exercises is optimistic. It affirms the goodness of the world. But it also is acutely aware of the pervasive problem of evil. At the same time it is contemplative and service-oriented.

**Flexible.** The Ignatian spiritual director does not impose a program on the directee. The manner of the direction is adjusted to fit the person's personality, life history, and spiritual experience. The director "cannot know beforehand what he or she will suggest."

**A partnership.** Ignatian spiritual direction is a partnership. It thus demands mutual respect and openness to the other's frame of reference. It follows Ignatius Loyola's admonition, "Let it be presupposed that every good Christian is to be more ready to save their neighbour's proposition than to condemn it."

**What do you really want?** Ignatian spiritual direction attempts to uncover the deepest desires of the human heart. Typically, these are smothered by superficial desires for transitory things. Our most profound desires are shaped by the Holy Spirit and point toward new choices for spiritual growth and fruitful service.

**Rules for discernment.** Ignatius Loyola's rules for discernment of spirits permeate Ignatian spiritual direction. These are methods for identifying inner movements, reflecting on them, and understanding where they come from and where they lead us.

Brian O'Leary, SJ, "What Is Specific to an Ignatian Model of Spiritual Direction?" *The Way*, Jan/April 2008, pp. 9–28. <http://www.theway.org.uk/Back/4712oleary.pdf>

In this too large chair,  
may I sit with you?  
May I hear your story?  
Although I cannot know you,  
may I recognise the movement  
of our God wrestling and  
filling your soul, making bigger  
your being and mine,  
awakening parts of yourself  
you do not know;  
an undoing of the wrapping  
glimpsed in the dappled light  
of God's unfolding?

I am small beside the gift.  
I cannot say no  
to God Who loves me  
into this direction with you.  
I am humbled,  
amazed.  
We are small together.