

CURSILLO SCHOOL GROUPS

Lesson Plan # 6

Directions: Have a member of the School Group read this and all members discuss as you go along. Stay on track.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

The role of the diocesan spiritual director: his environment is the leaders in the movement. He is to evangelize them, and his effectiveness will be in proportion to his personal holiness. (manual)

His role: He is to keep the vision of the movement (through the secretariat, leaders school and ultreya) clearly focused. He plays a vital part in selecting and helping to penetrate the environment. He is also expected to make the bishop and local clergy aware of the potential of our movement in the process of evangelization, which Pope Paul VI said was the church's reason for existence.

On the weekends the spiritual director is to check lay talks and make sure they conform to church teaching. He is responsible for all doctrinal talks personally or in the selection for the choice of those trained theologically to give the talks. He must always keep the ULTIMATE VISION of the movement before the eyes of the team. He needs to constantly remind all that a weekend conversion experience is certainly not the end of the retreat nor is it the goal of the movement. Rather it is the first step toward understanding that our Cursillo method is valuable as well as viable.

In group reunions the director acts as a watch dog to insure that our gatherings never become mere naval gazing nor yet mere chit chat sessions. Their focus must always be to focus on HOW to evangelize the environment and whether the group is actually doing so.

At ultreyas the spiritual director normally sits in a group unless requested for personal spiritual direction at that time. Nonetheless the main function of a spiritual director should eventually be to develop a group of spiritual directors. His is the theological, philosophical and scriptural background needed to form others. Indeed it has been well said that no one really

does a job well who has not trained a dozen others to do the same job equally well.

Questions:

1. Do you see your diocesan spiritual director fulfilling his role in these areas? Is there any area being neglected presently?
2. Now that you know spiritual direction can be requested at Ultreya during grouping sessions can you see yourself requesting it at times? If not why not?
3. Can you envisage yourself as a spiritual director of the future on a one to one basis? Why? Why not?

THE ADVANTAGES OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION.

The image some have unfortunately been given of a spiritual director is some sort of a spiritual traffic cop blowing a whistle and waving you on in the direction you MUST take. There are, to be sure, images of by-gone saints who seem to have always accepted the voice of their director as God's voice for them whatever and in all circumstances. Even though St. Alphonsus Liguori decidedly believed in this approach, -- it was taken for granted in his age, -- nonetheless he did change directors, convinced that one was not leading him closer to God. For him the will of God was tantamount to God himself.

Listening, of course, is fundamental to knowing any person. . So the more carefully we listen to the scriptures and to God's word wherever we hear his voice the better we know our compassionate Savior and relentless Lover. That is why in spiritual direction we listen carefully after bouncing matters of growth and concern off another so that other may tell us what he or she hears us saying as it comes across to them.

Now there are numerous definitions of one-to-one spiritual direction. Among these are the following:

- a) The help one person gives another to enable them to become their true self in faith.
- b) Help toward growth that we receive in our ability to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- c) The continuous process involved in establishing and maintaining a developing relationship with the Lord.
(Thomas Merton)

Questions:

1. Which definition can you best relate to? Why?
2. At present do you have someone in your life who

fulfills that role? If not why not?

3. Have you begun spiritual direction and then for one reason or another stopped? Is there a reason you feel you can share with this group?

Now there are in effect concentric circles in authentic spiritual direction, each giving a direction of its own. Among these, perhaps the most important are:

- a) The official teachings of the church.
- b) One-to-one formal direction.
- c) Hidden direction by which we mean that which comes from people and circumstances of daily life.

The question naturally arises: WHO then is a spiritual director?

The answer is a believing, prayerful Christian who is willing to listen and to truly care for the person. It is also one who is aware of his or her personal journey to the Father on the same road....one who knows well that they themselves have not as yet arrived. In addition it is one who is willing and prepared to share our search with others traveling on the same journey....an OPEN person.

Questions:

1. Many complain "but all the priests I know or would want are too busy". Now does a spiritual director have to be a priest? A nun? A theologian? Why?
2. Can laity be good spiritual directors? Why? Can you name someone whom you think would make a good spiritual director?

Now let's take a quick look at some of the qualities required for a good spiritual director. First and probably most important that person would need an adequate and accurate knowledge of self, -- their weaknesses as well as their strong points. Next, -- and equally vital, -- one needs the ability to listen IN DEPTH -- not merely to syllables or even words or sentences, but to listen to the TOTALITY OF WHAT OTHER IS SAYING. After that, the ability to speak the truth openly, honestly and objectively...no pussyfooting or fear of hurting someone's feelings. There will be times when we need to tell the other or even be told ourselves, " I'd sure love to see you do all you talk about"!

In addition, a good director needs to be open and tolerant of a wide number of personalities and spiritualities. A sine qua non is the ability to recognize and the common sense to determine normalcy or absence of same. So without a lived spirituality of

one's own plus a creditable life style, -- and particularly a willingness to be seen as a wounded healer, -- in touch with one's own sinfulness and willingness to grow, and "direction" given may be learned from books but will sooner or later be revealed as hollow. By way of summary: "spiritual direction is the ministry of the listening heart".

Questions:

1. Do you think that "self knowledge" alone would qualify as a spiritual director? Would it help? How much? What else is vital?
2. Do you have a spiritual director? Does he or she hesitate to reveal themselves as a "wounded healer"?
3. Have you met many good listeners? What makes for a good listener? Would those you've met qualify as spiritual directors? Why?

Finally,- who needs a spiritual director? To begin, 'teens are seldom ready for it. Yet some few might well be. It might be the place to help decide a vocation. Most people in their twenties are still running too hard and fast. Now many who have reached their thirties and who have met a few disillusionments in life are good candidates. Someone needs to help them to get the wider picture and set priorities for presumably a long journey ahead. Once that terrible shock of turning forty has subsided many begin to wonder about the meaning of life and the passing of time. ...the meaning of marriage and vocation and their faith. These are prime candidates for solid spiritual direction. But wait,- in your late fifties and on into the eighties a good deal of paranoia can be avoided by looking at life through the eyes of a sound director who has heard you out, and who is in close enough touch with God to bring you closer. A few measurements taken, the offer of a spiritual trip-tik and one is usually anxious and enthused about continuing the journey.

Questions:

1. Do I know the real me?
2. Do I have an authentic relationship with the Lord? With anyone? How deep is it? Can I talk about it comfortably?
3. Am I really a person for others or am I self-centered? Always?
4. Who are my real role models, -- living or deceased? Who SHOULD be? Who are my most unforgettable people?

(Note: -- Much of this matter came from a lecture to NOCERCC by Msgr. Jerome Neufeld).