

Programme Structure and Venue

One Year Course - 10 monthly sessions
Tuesdays 10am until 5pm
January until November (excluding August)
At Aylesford Friary



The Friars, Aylesford,
Kent, ME20 7BX

This informative and practical programme is offered specifically to priests and deacons of the Archdiocese of Southwark.

Course cost to be shared,
2/3 parish expense, 1/3 participant's expense

More Information

To apply or for more information about the training programme please visit the Archdiocese of Southwark website:

www.rcaos.co.uk [ministry/clergy section]

<https://ogfsouthwark.org.uk>

or email: spiritualdirection@rcaos.org.uk



I have served as a Spiritual Director for over twenty years. Accompanying people on their journey of faith has been, and remains, a privilege and a joy. I very much welcome this course of Spiritual Direction formation for clergy in our Archdiocese. It will help and equip us to walk with others as they discern and deepen their inner life with Christ and all this means for discipleship.

Archbishop John Wilson



A spiritual director is one who helps another to recognise and to follow the inspirations of grace in their life, in order to arrive at the end to which God is leading them.

Thomas Merton



Training Programme in Spiritual Direction for Southwark Clergy



Sharing the Journey of Faith

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction, also known as Spiritual Accompaniment, offers an opportunity to share and deepen our unique relationship with God.



A Spiritual Director accompanies others as they reflect on their life and experience, and encourages them to listen more deeply to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to their thoughts, feelings and desires in a prayerful atmosphere, so that they may see the presence and action of God more clearly in their life.

As a priest or deacon you will have already had extensive training and acquired experience in many areas and it is hoped this course will build on that and enrich your ministry.

The programme focuses on developing the skills of:

- Attentive and compassionate listening.
- Accompanying others whose journey of faith may be quite different from our own, thus developing greater empathy and non-judgemental understanding.

- Developing a greater understanding of the language of spiritual growth and the journey towards God. As well as offering a greater immersion in the richness of the Catholic Spiritual tradition
- Helping others to develop their prayer life, to see the presence and guidance of God in their everyday life.

You may wish to develop these skills to become more experienced and effective in accompanying others or rather to enhance your life and ministry.

The opportunity to share your understanding and gifts with others on the course. To focus on spiritual growth.

*Spiritual Direction is, in reality,
nothing more than a way of leading us
to see and obey the real Director - the Holy
Spirit hidden in the depths of our soul*

Thomas Merton

A few musings on Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction is a sacred art; less about technique and more about helping someone to live in the Spirit. A direction session focuses on a person's relationship with God and is not simply a cosy chat, even about spiritual things; direction must retain that vertical dimension. Remembering always that Spiritual Accompaniment is a charism given by the Holy Spirit.

Above all a Spiritual Director must be a person who prays and strives to centre their life on Christ and is serious in nourishing their own spiritual life. Without that, the task becomes merely human guidance. *Nemo dat quod non habet* (You cannot give what you do not have)

It is good to honestly acknowledge where our gifts and strengths lie, the limits of those gifts and those gifts we do not possess. Alongside the humble recognition of our limitations we should remember that the Holy Spirit can and does override our limitations and even work through them. To some extent the less we do the better. There is a real service of humility and poverty in giving Spiritual Direction.

With Spiritual Direction I think it essential to bear in mind that we are treading on the 'Holy Ground' of an individual's soul and it is essential to proceed with profound respect. Like Moses before the burning bush, we need to approach with the vulnerability of bare feet!



I hope that all who embark on this course will find it of great benefit, enriching their own spiritual life and giving them greater confidence to accompany those who seek spiritual direction.

Canon Luke Smith
Episcopal Vicar for Priestly Life & OGF Director