

# PERSONAL SPIRITUALITY

## GOAL:

To be aware of one's own spirituality and to discover ways to develop and express it

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

- a.
  - i. Define spirituality
  - ii. Identify ways of exploring and developing personal spirituality.
- b.
  - i. Using an account of their own spiritual journeying, illustrate their understanding of their own spirituality and compare and contrast this with one other definition and model.
  - ii. Describe ways that you can use these learnings for their ongoing development of their personal spirituality
- c. Use participation in a group experience, retreat experience, journalling and. set reading as resources to indicate and expand upon at least three insights of spirituality that have challenged them in the preceding year.

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# WHAT TO DO

<b>Step One</b>	<b>Understanding Spirituality &amp; Prayer</b>	<b>2 hours</b>
1.	Read pages 3-4	
	a. Look up a dictionary definition of spirituality and of prayer.	
	b. Read resource material from pages 5-7	
	c. In your own words write a one page definition of spirituality & prayer.	
	d. Begin a journal. (Note pages 3-4)	
<b>Step Two</b>	<b>Exploring Prayer</b>	<b>3 hours \ week</b>
2.	Read the Prayer Resource material (pages 5-12) and choose 1 other style in addition to journalling and Scripture. You will experiment with a different style for three hours per week over the next three weeks, beginning with Journalling as Prayer. For the purposes of this module you are required to experiment with three types, discussing your findings with your mentor. We recommend you explore further with the other types in your own time if possible for your own benefit.	
<b>Step Three</b>	<b>Exploring My Spirituality</b>	<b>2 hours</b>
3.	Read resource material (12-17) & Corinne Ware material.(22-29)	
	a. Complete the Koru exercise and meet with your mentor to share your insights and responses.	
	b. keep journalling!	
<b>Step Four</b>	<b>Journeying Deeper</b>	<b>4 hours</b>
4.	Read page 18	
	a. Drawing on your recent and past experiences of the different forms of prayer, both in group and individual prayer times, as well as your insights from the Koru, and your journalling, <b>Either</b>	
	i. prepare an essay using images to illustrate themes within your spiritual journey. (Up to 1,000 words) <b>Or</b>	
	ii. find an alternative creative way to express your learnings and insights. Eg tape recorder, picture...	
	b. Share with your mentor.	
<b>Step Five</b>	<b>Beyond Ourselves</b>	<b>3 hours</b>
5.	Read pages 19-20.	
	a. Design a prayer experience or session exploring spirituality for use in your ministry.	

# RESOURCE MATERIAL

## Spirituality

*'Spirituality is not knowing what you want but understanding what you do not need.'*

*'To succeed in the adventure called spirituality one must have one's mind set on getting the most out of life. Most people settle for trifles like wealth, fame, comfort and human company.'*<sup>1</sup>

As pervasive and encompassing as the air around us, our spirituality is an essential part of us. And as with the air we often take for granted, we can lose something of the profound influence spirituality has in our lives. How often do we stop to reflect upon and appreciate the wonder that air is? It is an interesting point to ponder and one that would offer as many insights as there are people to contest such an issue.

At this point I feel it is appropriate to acknowledge the Catholic context that I, as writer of this module, am coming from. As a Franciscan brother in a Catholic religious order I have been blessed with the opportunity to have explored a variety of expressions of spirituality and prayer in my faith journey. I hope your explorations in prayer and spirituality will be as life-giving and enjoyable.

Spirituality, similar to air in that it is intangible, is both a quality and influence in our lives. Your ability in being able to see and appreciate your spirituality, as well as to explore and adopt new ways of deepening your faith journey through this awareness are the potential rewards in exploring this module. This module will draw on the faith experiences in your life in addition to requesting a commitment to experiment in trying out different styles of prayer. In light of this, it is acknowledged that a large amount of the time expenditure in this module will lie in the area of prayer and reflection. We would hope that you could incorporate some of this as a part of your prayer life in general, rather than feeling you have to double up. Rather than viewing this module as a task, look at it as a gift you can give to yourself. In entering the process of this module you will be embarking on a journey that will lead you to a deeper awareness of your own spirituality as well as a greater appreciation of the different spirituality's of other people.

In this pack you will find seven Prayer sheets which provide a suggested format to be followed in venturing into differing styles of prayer. Some of the styles may be familiar to you, some new, but as much as possible attempt the styles that look new to you in preference to what is familiar and comfortable. Over a period of at least three weeks, experiment with a different style of prayer each week. Stay focused on the particular prayer style you have chosen for each week, praying consistently in that style for the entirety of the week before moving on to a new prayer type.

Some of the suggested reading material found at the end of this pack may also assist in providing alternative techniques for entering prayer. It is timely to point out that Prayer is not the same thing as Spirituality, but as you will discover, is an essential component to your personal spirituality.

1. De Mello. A. *The Prayer of the Frog*. Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash. 1989. 68, 87

It will be important for you to note your own feelings and reactions to each prayer type, for yourself as well as sharing your observations with your mentor. Of paramount importance to the process of this module is the need for you to keep a journal. If you already are a journal addict this will be superfluous information. However if journalling is a new or unfamiliar concept for you, these are the important guidelines to note.

# Journalling

Put in the most basic way, journalling is really a diary of sorts, but whereas a diary records the events of a day or week, a journal focuses on the feelings and emotions of the period in question. Virtually anything can go into a journal - it is the receptacle for your thoughts, hopes and dreams, fears, struggles, doubts and questions, happy memories..... You may wish to register your anger over a particular experience or dialogue with yourself about how good it felt when someone affirmed a gift of yours. Your journal is the place where you can be fully honest with your feelings, with yourself. Don't restrict yourself in what you write in your journal, it is a raw and powerful way of communicating with yourself and with God in you.

Sometimes you may look back on what you have written and squirm, thinking 'How could I have written that?' Don't cross earlier writings out - you wrote what you did because it expressed what you felt at a particular time. Respect your earlier feelings and thoughts. If you resort to 'correcting' your journal as you look back on it, you will sanitise and minimise any learning's and insights you might otherwise gain from your journal. Finally, any journal is a powerful tool for the self and as such is confidential. Make sure you mark your journal well so that people know it is PRIVATE! All you have to do now is choose an appropriate and appealing blank book to be your journal.

It should come as no surprise that this is the first style of prayer you are asked to explore. Some will find journalling works for them, others will not get as much out of it, but either way you are asked to begin with this exercise as your first prayer style. When you move onto the different prayer styles over the following weeks, use your journal to talk about how you experience each type, noting highs and lows, joys and struggles. You will find that the journal becomes a significant gauge of your progress in this journey, and it shouldn't stop with the conclusion of this module! Good Luck!!

However, before we go any further, let's begin by exploring your own understanding of what spirituality is.

In your own words write approximately one page defining and describing what spirituality means to you.

Look up the dictionary meaning of the words spirituality and prayer. Do they match your understanding of the terms?

What is the relationship between spirituality and prayer as you understand it?

Once you have done this, talk it through with your mentor.

# Prayer Resources

## JOURNALLING

For this style of prayer, you will need to allow yourself the gift of at least half an hour each day for the first week after which you may find that this is too often for you and that you prefer writing in it every second or third day. It is quite likely that you might find there is little to say on one day and heaps on the next. Half an hour is an approximate guide and you will find your own pattern that suits, but don't short-change yourself and give up early on. Apply yourself earnestly in dialoguing with God about your day.

### *Where?*

I find my room is the best place (and it's scripturally supported!). It needs to be a place free of interruptions and disruptive noises.

### *How?*

Begin by marking this as a time of prayer for you and God. You may find lighting a candle helps mark this as a prayer space and time, or maybe singing a reflective song. Then take some time to think back over your day. Reflect on the things you did well as well as acknowledging the weak spots in the day. Ask yourself, where did I let myself down today? What could have been the more preferable path to have taken? How might I improve on my actions tomorrow in light of this learning? Allow yourself to take credit for what you did well in your day, giving yourself a pat on the back.

Describe your feelings to God, what it is like to feel the things you experience. Feel free to express the anxieties, anger or fears as much as the happy and joyous moments and dreams.



### *What now?*

Conclude your time of journalling prayer by looking back over your journal entry for the day, letting yourself appreciate the presence of God in your day - in the good and the not so good moments. Finish with again reminding yourself of the one thing you will attempt to do differently tomorrow and affirming yourself in that which you did well in today.

*Note. Occasionally some things will play on our mind and we can find ourselves berating our ourselves over a perceived mistake in our day. If such an occasion persists, more journalling will hopefully assist you in reconciling your struggle. If not, you may wish to approach someone you trust in order to discern this further. Some people find a Spiritual Director very helpful in this regard. We will explore the role of a Spiritual Director later in this pack.*

## ART

This can be a really creative way of spending time with God and you don't need to be a 'good' artist to pray this way. As for journalling, allow yourself a good half hour each day. If possible a longer period of time put aside for this leaves you the flexibility to carry on with your creative dialogue if you so wish. This is a style of prayer that is often of benefit when there is a major life-event that you would like to reflect upon. In light of this I've found that this is a prayer style that is more ideal when used spasmodically rather than daily.

### *Where?*

Someplace you are free of distractions and intrusions is an important starting point. Depending on which artistic medium you intend using you might need to take its specific requirements into account (e.g. cleanable area, ideal work surface to 'create' upon.)

Try to have the materials you require ready in advance so that your prayer time isn't eaten into with finding the necessary bits and pieces.

### ***How?***

There are a range of mediums to choose from. You may even choose to try a different one each day for variety and to use different senses. Drawing or painting can be done using anything - pencils, charcoal pencils, pastels, crayons, colouring pencils, inks and paints.

Perhaps try charcoal (mono-colour) on one day and colour on another. Working with clay is another artistic medium which utilises the sense of touch in a greater way, and can also pick up on the wonderful "Potter" imagery present in scripture. (You will need water and some newspaper as well as your clay and something to mold and shape your piece upon). Collages are another way of creating in prayer, using magazine pictures, or flowers and sticks and feathers and so on.

Having chosen your preferred medium for your time of prayer, there are a number of ways this can become a prayerful experience for you. Begin by allowing yourself to relax and focus on being present to God. Be aware of your feelings and then simply begin to create.....

For some people the prayer finds its expression in the creating of their art. For others, the prayer finds significance of meaning in reflecting upon their creation when it is completed. And others may find that prayer lies in offering their finished creation to God even though they may struggle within themselves to understand what it is that their creation represents. Still others may find that

this way of praying just isn't them - at this time in their life.



### ***What now?***

Journalling can often be a helpful companion after praying through art, but you may wish simply to leave your art piece in a prominent place in your room as a reminder for you of your time with God. It may even offer the possibility of further reflection for you. Irregardless of how much artistic ability you perceive yourself to possess, anyone can enter this way of praying as there is no need for the creation to represent anything in particular, i.e it doesn't have to look like an obvious object. Allow yourself to 'go abstract' think of the fun impressionist painters and sculptures must have!

## **EMPTYING**

This form of prayer comes with the shortest and simplest of instructions but is often one of the hardest forms to persist with and deepen. However, for those who do, it can also be one of the most powerful. What makes it so hard? The challenge in this type of prayer is that it is all about listening to God. It requires us to clear our mind of all thoughts and distractions and to sit in the stillness of God's presence.

### ***Where?***

That quiet undisturbed place...

### ***How?***

Prepare yourself for this time of prayer by using the relaxing techniques described in the meditation prayer guide. Become focused on your breathing, taking deeper and slower breaths until your breathing settles into a deep and gentle rhythm of its own. If distractions come into your mind, do not fight them but simply acknowledge them and let them go. If you put energy into fighting the images and thoughts that appear you will only intensify them and frustrate yourself making the time of prayer anything but!

Don't expect great things immediately, in fact don't be surprised if you can only go for a few minutes before being foiled. A few minutes strictly adhered to each morning and evening is all that is asked and if you persist you will be able to go for longer periods of prayer with time.

***"Become focused on your breathing, taking deeper and slower breaths until your breathing settles into a deep and gentle rhythm of its own."***

***What now?***

You may wonder what is achieved in this form of prayer in which silence and emptiness are the apparent focus. I believe there is much to be received in praying this way. For one, it is gift of ourselves to God, the gift of our time and presence without asking anything in particular of God. It is also gift to ourselves in allowing ourselves an opportunity of peace and solitude just to "Be" with our God. The Martha & Mary story can reveal much to us here! And finally, it is in the process of emptying ourselves that we enable space for God to enter and stay in 'our room'.

**MEDITATION**

Meditation is a form of prayer that can be wonderfully therapeutic for body, mind and soul. Sadly it is often avoided or even condemned by some people who, out of ignorance or fear, can perceive it to be threatening to what they know. Used as a way of drawing closer to God this style of prayer works in many faith contexts.

There are also a variety of techniques that can be followed in the meditation tradition, but for our purposes we will only look at one. The preparation process is also only one way of entering a meditative space and can also be used as a general way of entering any time of prayer or even as a way of letting go of stress at the end of a long day.

***Where?***

The ideal posture for meditating which I suggest is lying on your back stretched out straight. In view of this your prayer space will need to not only be free from noise and interruptions but also have ample space in which you can comfortably stretch out without restrictions.

***How?***

Begin by lying down on the floor, on your back with arms at your sides, legs stretched out and not crossed. Become aware of how your body feels where it is. Now, beginning with your feet you are going to stretch each muscle in your body, moving from your toes to the top of your head. Start with your feet. Stretch your toes back toward your body as far as you can and hold that stretch for four whole seconds before you release them. Feel the tension go out of them as you relax. Next tighten the calf muscles in your legs, holding the stretch for four seconds before releasing. Move onto your thigh muscles and repeat the same procedure. Follow this pattern as you progress up the body working through thighs, buttocks and groin, abdominals, stomach, back and then chest. Then move to your fingers, clenching your hands into tight fists and holding for 4 before releasing. Onto wrists, lower arm muscles, upper arm, shoulders, neck, jaw and finally face and scalp muscles.

Phew! When you have reached the top, pause briefly before tightening every muscle in your body simultaneously and holding for 4 seconds before releasing one final time. Feel all the tension flowing out of your body as you relax. Now become aware of your breathing and focus on taking some very deep breaths. Keep breathing deeply as you slow your breathing consciously. As your breathing grows deeper and more peaceful let your breathing take over with its own rhythm.

Well done! You can now focus on your meditation. If you have distracting thoughts or images come to you, simply acknowledge them and let them go. Another technique for gently dismissing distractions is to picture a cloud that the distractions drift behind and disappear. Now you are ready to try one of the following techniques.

### ë **Mantra:**

This form of meditation involves repeating a word or simple phrase over and over, thereby creating a rhythm through which you enter into a deeper communion with God. That word or phrase could be anything you choose. A simple word or phrase that appeals to you and holds meaning for you, e.g. "God is my love, God is my life" or "My God and my all" or "Jesus, have mercy on me". The options are endless, as long as the mantra has significance for you in your relationship with God. Repeat this mantra for the entirety of your meditation, faithfully coming back to it when distractions interrupt. At the conclusion of your time of meditation, stay a while in that quiet space while you become aware of your breathing again. Then become aware of the sensations of your body where it touches the floor and finally of the sounds around you, before returning in body to that place.

### ë **Inner light:**

In this meditation the focus becomes an imagined light at the center of your being. After following the relaxation process, imagine a candle flame that is flickering at the center of your being. Remain focused on this Christ-light for the duration of your meditation, slowly letting the light expand, growing and burning more brightly as it does. Allow yourself to feel the intensity of its glow and power as the Christ-light increases within you. As for the previous meditation the conclusion is a process of gradually returning to the room, bringing something of the peace and life of the inner light with you.

### ë **Guided Meditation:**

There are a number of books in the Christian tradition which offer samples of this form of meditation. In essence, it is quite similar to the praying with scripture technique which invites you to become a part of the story. For the purposes of this meditation, choose a scripture passage such as John's post-resurrection account (Jn21:1-23), or the call to mission which Jesus issues to all disciples.(Mt 10:1-16). Read it through several times to familiarise yourself with it before beginning the meditation. Prepare yourself using the relaxing process and when you are ready, imagine the scene and let the encounter with Jesus unfold, paying attention to your dialogues with Jesus and the feelings and emotions that arise - this can be great material for post-meditation reflection. When the story has finished, let the scene fade away and return to the room as is described in the instructions for the first meditation style.

*Note: Some people find that reflective, background music of a gentle instrumental nature helps create the right atmosphere for their meditating. It's entirely up to you. Some people also find that they fall asleep midway through a meditation, particularly if they are meditating in the evening. This is no reason to feel you've failed, it is perfectly OK to fall asleep - all this is telling you is that your body needs sleep at this point and you have created a healthy environment for it to do so.*

## **NATURE**

The motto for this style of prayer could easily be "God saw it was good". This is a way of praying that invites the participation of most of the senses. An advantage of this experience of prayer is that you can do it virtually anywhere. You may choose to put some time aside to go to a particular park, beach, bushwalk or hilltop, or you may choose to explore the beauty of your own backyard. As with praying with art, I find that this is a form of prayer that benefits from occasional use rather than as a daily routine.

### ***Where?***

Having said the above, obviously one would like to be free of interruptions. Noise isn't so much an issue here as sound is a part of creation, even the sounds of humanity about its business! Understandably there are limits to the degree of noise - an attempt at prayer in a machinery workshop environment could pose considerable difficulty. Ideally you will be able to use your imagination to think of ideal places to embark on the prayer of creation.

### ***How?***

Begin by choosing a passage of scripture that praises God for the gifts of creation or one that bemoans the treatment of creation. There are a great many psalms that can be utilised for this purpose. You could also use other reflective writings that pertain to creation and its creator if you have such material.

*Day one:* Armed with your reflective passage, stride boldly into the wonder that is creation! Find yourself somewhere to sit where you can look around and take in the sights and sounds of creation. Be attentive to the wider picture, taking in the trees, grass, dirt, birds, butterflies, animals, people, vehicles, insects, sky and clouds, ..... Be aware of the sounds and smells as well as the feel of the ground beneath you, and the wind or breeze about you. Appreciate the textures, colours and shapes of all you see. Contemplate the complexity and wonder of nature, of which you are a part. You may wish to talk with God of what you see and experience. Conclude your time in the 'Cathedral of Creation' by reciting your passage.

*Day two:* Supplied with a new passage, set forth again as for the previous day, but today with a slightly different mission. Today you will need to find a small piece of creation, a leaf or a twig, an ant about its business, a spider's web, a glistening drop of dew,... Spend this time of prayer concentrating on the beauty, intricacy and uniqueness of that which you behold. Close your eyes and form a picture of it, marvelling at its design. Open your eyes and now contemplate this part of creation in relation to the wider context. Where did you find it? Is it a part of another system or larger unit? What does it need to survive? Give thanks for this gift of creation and conclude with your reflective passage.

*Day three:* Prepare yourself with reflection in hand and enter God's garden again. Spend this time of prayer especially attentive to the sounds of creation. Find somewhere to sit or lie and close your eyes. Contemplate God in the sounds of creation and conclude as for previous days.

*Day four:* With passage in hand, venture forth with a particular emphasis on the smells and sights of nature today. Sniff flowers, leaves, herbs, dirt, the air and even the cat (if you can catch it!). Let your eyes take in the movements of creation, the colours, shapes and shades of creation. Be aware of the gift these senses (and the others) are for you. This is opportunity also to be prayerfully mindful of those who have lost or never had the use of some of these senses. Reflectively conclude with your passage.

*Day five:* Fortunately there are more than 7 scripture texts which talk of creation! With number 5 under your arm let yourself feel your way into creation today. Touch and appreciate the feel of nature. Don't limit the task of touch to your hands only, feel the sensation of a flower against your cheeks, eyelids and lips. Appreciate what a stone feels like when touched to your ear. Contemplate on touch and the gift of substance and texture in creation. Finish your prayer time in the usual way.

*Day six:* This day really needs particular conditions, namely a day with clouds amidst a blue sky, preferably being assisted in movement by the wind. For this reason you may wish to alter the order in which you follow the nature prayer. Find yourself a nice secluded and relatively quiet place to lie

down. Study the clouds today - it's as simple as that. Contemplate their shapes, sizes, colour and movement. How much do they change in form as they glide along? Consider their nature and purpose. Give thanks for the gift they are. Finish as per usual.

*Day seven:* This should really be called night seven as this prayerful expedition ideally will take place on a dark and starry night. As for the cloud experience this will be subject to the appropriate conditions being in place. I suspect that you can guess the pattern. Contemplate the starry heavens and listen also for the sounds of creation at night. After your time of contemplation conclude in the usual manner.

An option to this or any of the recommended prayer formats is to take the opportunity to experience some of nature's other elements. Seize the opportunity to walk in the rain and feel the touch of water from above. All too often we isolate ourselves from some elements of nature. In an urban setting this is further compounded and intensified. It is good to grab such opportunities to experience intimately all that God has to offer in creation. The ideal of such a form of praying is to awaken the passion of life in us. To also appreciate the immensity and wonder of creation and ourselves as part of it. I hope this can be an enlivening form of prayer for you.

## **SCRIPTURE**

There are a variety of ways in which scripture can be used as prayer. I will suggest a few here but this in no way excludes other ways of praying with scripture. Choose only one of the following styles and stay consistently with that one style for the week. You can always try the others at a later stage.

### ***Where?***

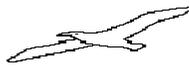
As for the other prayer styles which call for a place of quiet and that is free from interruption. It doesn't necessarily have to be your room or even inside if you can be sure of a place elsewhere that meets the requirements.

### ***How?***

Begin by marking this as a time of encountering God. Allow yourself sufficient time to relax and 'de-tense'.

### **ë Super-slow reading.**

One technique that can be used with scripture is that of 'super-slow reading'. This a way of praying that can also be applied to any form of spiritual reading material. Choose a passage of scripture which you would like to reflect upon.



Limit yourself to reading the first sentence or two. At most read 2 or 3 sentences but no more. The beauty and strength of this prayer lies in not swamping ourselves with loads of material. Read the sentence or two and then close your eyes in reflection for a minute. Reread the sentence again, this time several times, allowing yourself to note anything about the text that strikes you - positively or negatively. Again close your eyes and mull over the text in your mind and heart. Perhaps you can see yourself in this piece of text, perhaps you can feel a certain reaction inside yourself when you read this text - why might that be? Spend this time of prayer simply in reflecting on that small passage, for tomorrow you will move onto the next sentence or two and repeat this exercise, slowly working through the passage. The goal is not about 'getting the bible read' but absorbing the detail and power of the God-inspired Word in a gentle reflective way. End your time of prayer with a final rereading of the passage before giving thanks to God for this time of gift.

### ë **Gospel Centred**

A second technique and one which I've personally found to be quite empowering comes from the Ignatian tradition of spirituality. Begin by seating yourself in a comfortable but straight and upright chair. Relax yourself using the method prescribed for the meditation prayer style. Once you are relaxed, repeat a short reflective prayer inviting God to share this time with you. This could be something as simple as my "God and my all". Now, take a pre-chosen scripture story from the gospels or Acts and read it through. Preferably choose one that appeals to you. Pause briefly before reading it a second and third time.

Now closing your eyes, let the story come alive for you. Imagine you are there. Allow time for the scene to appear, see the sights, hear the sounds, smell the smells. Is it warm or cold? What is happening. Now let the story begin to unfold with you taking a place in it. Who might you be in the story? Jesus? Or perhaps one of the other people mentioned -disciple, gentile, onlooker, person being healed/ affirmed/ challenged? Be a part of the story and feel what it is like to be there. What do you say? How do you feel? What are you thinking? How do others react to you? Remain aware of where Christ is in this story and what he does and says. When the story is finished let the scene fade, but remain aware too of key insights you may have gained in this encounter with Jesus. Conclude your time of prayer by reflecting on the story's relevance and significance to your life at present.

### ë **Entering the Scripture**

The third suggested prayer method in using scripture is similar to the one just mentioned. But instead of taking a story, choose a passage of scripture that appeals to you from the first or new Testament. With this technique you are not going to imaginatively insert yourself into the text but rather allow the passage to speak to you. Read the chosen passage several times (after you have relaxed yourself as for the above style) and then reflect on it. Note any word/s or a particular phrase that might have leapt out at you. Stay with that word or phrase for some time but don't analyse it. You may find that distractions threaten - don't be frustrated but allow the word or phrase to hover over these other thoughts. Let yourself reflect at a deeper level as to what this passage might be saying to you. After some time reread the passage. Does it invoke a response in you pertaining to your life at present. This is an ideal opportunity to talk with God about what this passage raises for you. Finish your time of prayer in quiet stillness, free of any judgement -of self, or others.

*The following are some suggested scripture passages you can use for any of the above ways of praying:*

Mt 3:13-17	Lk 5:1-11	Lk 7:36-50
Lk 2:1-20	Mt 14:13-21	Amos 5 & 6
Mt 4:1-11		Mk 5:21-41
Jn 2:1-12	Mt 14:22-33	Is 1:11-19

### **PRAYER OF BEING**

This is a way of praying that requires very little in the way of 'props' as such and can be applied absolutely anywhere. The challenge in this prayer is in keeping oneself aware of the whole day as infused with a sense of God. Another name for this prayer form is The Eternal Now, implying that it is in focusing on the present moment that we seek to encounter God in our day.

The technique is surprisingly simple and, as noted before, does not require much in the way of setting or aids. The aim of the prayer of being is to bring God into the present moment, the moment of now. Whether you are washing the dishes, gardening, walking the dog, or sitting on a bus heading to or from home, these are all opportunities for the Eternal Now.

***Where?***

Almost anywhere.

***How?***

It can be helpful to begin a particular day by a simple reflective prayer time in which you affirm your desire to focus on bringing God regularly into conscious thought this day. Do not feel however that this is a pre-requisite as the beauty of this prayer lies in the ability to spontaneously use it anywhere and anytime. You will also likely find that the more you practice consciously bringing God into your day in this fashion ,the more this will begin to occur more naturally of its own accord.

After this it is up to you to consciously seize moments throughout the day where you focus on being aware of god in the action of what you are doing. Do your best to maintain a focus on this sense of awareness to God for several minutes at least as you continue the activity you are involved in. Conclude each moment by being thankful for such an opportunity to welcome God into the activity of your day.

The ultimate joy of this prayer is in drawing God more and more into the daily reality of your life, increasing our centredness on God.



# Christian Spirituality

## WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

Spirituality is distinct from "prayer." Whereas we can describe prayer as the making available of one's self to God for some sense of communication or communion, spirituality is concerned with how our spirit makes this communion. It is concerned with our "disposition" of spirit in our relation with God. E.g. I might want to communicate with God by my art - that is a question of prayer style. How I make that communication through my art (do I seek the God in the world around me or use the art to transcend what I see about me, for example) is a question of spirituality.

## STYLES OF SPIRITUALITY.

Spirituality is subject not only to the particular needs of the individual but is subject to local culture and even to fashion! My spiritual tradition has been influenced by my Catholic up-bringing and faith journey, and it is from this perspective that I write. In a sense you could say that the Catholic "culture" has shaped my spirituality. Whether you are Catholic or not, you will likely remember the T.V series' "Brides of Christ", or "Father Ted". These portrayals, while admittedly exaggerated, illustrate a fairly recent Catholic spirituality filled with statues, structured devotions and centred on sacraments and sacramentals. Preceding ages of Catholics, however, have used other techniques such as asceticism, bridal imagery and prayers of emptiness. Alternatively, we can see how spirituality is reflected in different denominations. Entering a traditional Presbyterian church, one would see that the pulpit is generally the largest piece of furniture, emphasising the importance of the word of God in this tradition. (Longer sermons as a part of the service further indicate this.) Further-more the way different denominations respond to something as simple as the call "Let us Pray" - Catholics stand, Anglicans kneel, Presbyterians sit, and Methodists do whatever! Whilst these are elements of style, they also reflect something of spirituality in a tradition. Provided that one doesn't go to extremes, each and any variety of spirituality can be useful. It is meaningless to talk of "the right" spirituality as if there were one ultimate, all-encompassing "blue-print". Similarly, it is dangerous to assert that there are "wrong" styles of spirituality - even of New Age styles! The measure of any style of spirituality lies in its ability to enable the individual in journeying more deeply into the heart of God in their life.

## CLASSIFYING SPIRITUALITY.

The following section contains rather technical language. I have endeavoured to avoid complicating things through excessive use of such terms, but felt it was important to introduce you to them at this stage. You may find that you need to return to the meaning of certain words as you read through this section. The accompanying diagram will hopefully make this more easily understood.

There are two ways of classifying spirituality. Firstly, we can understand it according to whether the prayer is filled with words, images, feelings and emotions. This is a prayer of fullness, known technically as *kataphasia*. Alternatively, the goal of the prayer can be to empty oneself of all thoughts and feelings, called emptiness or *apophasia*.

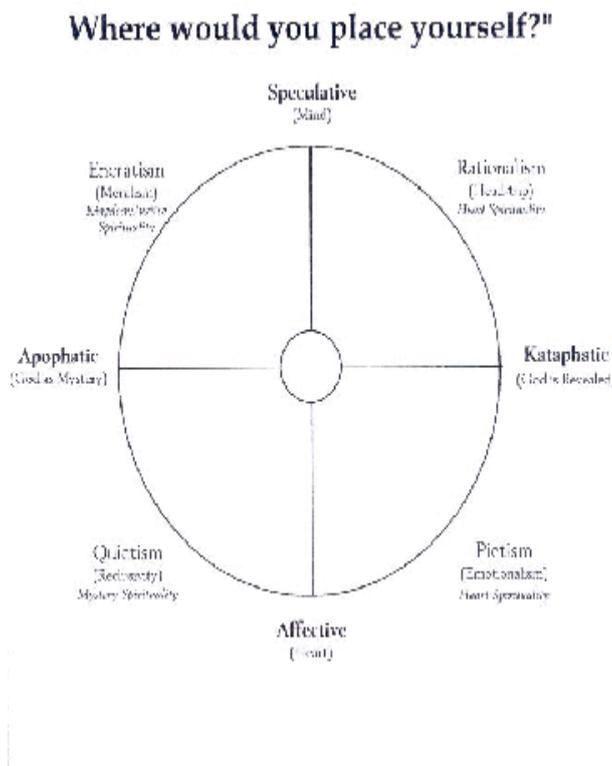
Prayer can also be classified according to whether it is principally an exercise of the mind, thought and imagination which is known as *speculative* (what we will call mind prayer) or an exercise of the heart, feelings and emotions referred to as *affective* (emotional). Thus traditional Catholic devotions as mentioned above could be classified as an instance of kataphatic affective spirituality (Prayer of fullness and emotion). Charismatic spirituality could also be classified as using prayer of fullness and emotional emphasis. The diagram below further illustrates the variety of spirituality types and where they might appear on the circle of sensibility (which we refer to as the Spirituality Circle.)

Provided that one does not stray too far in any one direction at the expense of one of the four components, any spirituality is useful in coming to know God. For example, if you find your spirituality lies somewhere in the top right corner of the 'Circle' you would classify your spirituality as one that relies heavily upon prayer of fullness and mind. To stray too far in this corner, say towards a highly speculative (mind) focus, you risk warping your image of God through "intellectualising" God. You would then lose sense of the God of mystery who is so much greater than the human mind.

There is no place on the circle of sensibility that is ultimately ideal, i.e. maintaining a balanced spirituality doesn't mean you have to be dead center of the circle, but obviously any extreme position unbalances us and needs to be watched for.

**VARIETIES OF SPIRITUALITY.**

Obviously there is a wealth of spirituality available with which many people have never experimented, either through ignorance or hesitation in trying something "different." Particularly at this time of change when old symbols and language struggle to communicate effectively with young people, there is much to be said for exploring other varieties. The resurgence and popularity of other techniques such as Celtic Spirituality and Nature Spiritualities bear witness to this also. The following pages are but a few varieties of spirituality and you might be able to name some that aren't included here.



# Spirituality Variations

**Augustinian:** Looks at God's action in world events ('grace') while drawing on a historical salvation perspective. Tends toward fullness and utilising the mind and uses scripture as a prominent source of its meditative material.

**Benedictine** Characterised by offering all deeds of the day as part of the communion with God, both formal prayer and simple tasks and labours. Also nourished by the scriptures, particularly when read and applied to ones life in the daily context.

**Calvinist:** Speculative and kataphatic, the Word of God is the focus. This tradition sees such things as symbol, ritual and imagination as unnecessary, choosing the Scriptures and sermons as the ideal means to convey Christianity.

**Celtic** A spirituality which draws on 'emptying' and 'heart', this is enjoying a modern revival as a reaction to much of modern piety. It is very earth centred and delights in the use of natural symbols to draw one into the true order of the world as it was meant to be, i.e the Kingdom of God.

**Charismatic:** A highly affective (emotional/heart) spirituality focused on the place and role of the Holy Spirit. It is energetic and seeks to awaken the "gifts" of the Spirit in the individual for better communication with God. It draws strongly on the acts of the apostles and community is very important here.

**Franciscan:** Another 'emptying' and 'heart' style of spirituality, this is the source of much of what is now thought to be "typical" Catholic spirituality. It is focused on the person of the human Christ and on the events of his life and what they might have to say to us. Christmas cribs amongst other observances have come to us through this tradition.

**Ignatian:** 'Mind' and 'emptying' are the emphases in this tradition which seeks to put you "in the shoes of Jesus", e.g. imagining yourself being the blind man or bleeding woman being healed, or present at the wedding at Cana. The goal is that by doing so, you might become more attuned to the mind and spirit of Jesus.

**New Age:** It is important to mention this positive description as all too often people have a negative reaction to anything termed new age. It is a general term used to describe a lot of spiritualities in the 'emptying' tradition that react against the mind focused nature of Western culture since the Enlightenment. Interestingly, most of its elements are rediscoveries of old traditions put together in a new way.

**Orthodox:** Another general term used to describe the 'mind' and 'emptying' traditions of the eastern church. It yearns for contact with the transcendent God by overcoming the distractions of physicality. The works by Anthony de Mello illustrate the eastern influence on Christian perspectives.

**Personality Spiritualities:** Based on the view that people differ in personality and therefore have differing ways of relating to God. It tends towards 'fullness' but otherwise would depend on the personality type of the individual concerned. Myers & Briggs, Enneagram, Jung all influence this more recent tradition.

**Social Justice Spiritualities:** These are spiritualities that take as their starting point, social conditions which become the basis for coming to experience God. It acknowledges that these shape our experience of God. Often used in Liberation Theology.

**Fundamentalism:** It is important at this stage to add a note regarding fundamentalism. In one sense it can be seen as a spirituality as it is about the way people relate to God. Strictly speaking though, fundamentalism is about an attitude or belief system. Fundamentalism is often associated with Charismatic or Pentecostal expressions of spirituality and while it can sometimes be present in these spiritualities, it can also be witnessed elsewhere. It usually features in reaction to much of modernity and the changes in society and religion. A literalist approach that denies the authenticity of any other spirituality can lead to fundamentalism. It doesn't only apply to Christianity either, e.g Muslim fundamentalists...).

*Note: It is worth noting also that you will likely see elements and characteristics of yourself in a number of these traditions. There is often overlap between the different varieties which accounts for one reason. Another reason is that people are much more free in this age to explore and be influenced by the different varieties of spirituality that are around. We are more readily exposed to different experiences and influences in our faith journeys.*



# Exploring My Spirituality

Now that we have gained a mental picture of what spirituality is, it is time for you to venture into the world of your own spirituality. The task you are asked to complete here calls you to reflect on your life, in particular on your faith journey through life to the present. Through such reflection you will be enabled to see how your spirituality has been shaped and formed by the people, places and events in your life. You may even be able to acknowledge where significant events or people have had a particular influence on your spirituality.

For the purpose of this exercise you will require a large sheet of blank paper and some crayons or colouring pencils. You will also need to allow yourself an hour in a prayerful and undisturbed environment to undertake and get the most out of this exercise.

Begin by drawing a spiral/koru on your paper starting at the centre and working out to the edge of the paper, using this diagram as a guide

Mark your date of birth at the center of the koru, and the present date at the end of the koru. Now let your mind wander back through the years noting the memories that come to mind. Begin with your earliest memories and then move through the years to the present. You don't need to record every year but do keep events in a chronological order (i.e in the order that they happened) and note the date by each entry you make on your Spirituality Koru . Recall significant events, places and people while also keeping in mind, how you understood and related to Jesus/ God at the various periods of your life. Note down both happy and sad memories, times of grief, anger, elation and so on - all are important.

Your chief focus should be the perceptions of God you held at different times in your life in addition to noting how you related to God at these times. By listing other significant memories you might also discover connections between key events in your life and changes in your faith journey.

After you have completed your *Spirituality Koru* look back over it with the following questions in mind. These could be reflected upon in your journaling.

- \* In what ways did I perceive/understand God as a child?
- \* What are the happiest moments in my Koru? The most sad or traumatic?
- \* Can I recall when my prayer life has been strongest? Weakest? Why?
- \* Can I see where there have been significant changes in my spirituality?

As a way of concluding this activity, take a moment to consider where you might have placed yourself on the circle of sensibility in the past and now.

*NB. This type of exercise can potentially bring significant hurts to the surface. We suggest that you approach your mentor or a counselor should this occur.*

# Journeying Deeper

## Understanding My Spirituality

Having reflected on the shaping and development of your spirituality through the years of your life, spend some time now looking back at the spirituality areas mentioned earlier. Are there areas that you feel resistance to or feel threatened by? What could be the reasons for this reaction in you? Are there spirituality types that attract you? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your spirituality as you see understand it?

Drawing on all the material you have covered thus far, making use of the insights gained through your journalling and different prayer experiences, collate your discoveries in a project/essay of a creative nature. Use either (A) or (B) to do this task before discussing your findings with your mentor prior to submitting your work.

- A. Using the medium of art and language, prepare an Image Essay (up to 1,000 words) in which you compare your spirituality with one other model that is quite different to your model. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses, as you see them, inherent in both models of spirituality and the differences between the two. In approaching your Image Essay try to find/create images that express different stages of your spiritual journey. These could be in the form of photos, pictures from magazines, or your own sketchings or drawings/paintings. Build your essay around these images, using them as themes which your writings will further describe. E.g. I might begin my essay with a sketch of me as an altar boy serving at a mass, to which I will speak of how I saw my faith as a child. Later in the essay I might include a colour drawing of a sunset, capturing and describing the growing awareness of my affinity with God in nature and the growth of this model of spirituality for me.
- B. Using an alternative means of presentation, express your understanding of your spirituality as you see it. As with the previous option, contrast your model with a different model of spirituality in order to highlight and explore the differences and implications. You may choose any means of creative expression to show your understanding. Art, tape, video, song... the choice is yours.

Whichever option you choose to work with you will need to incorporate the following points.

- ë Indicate and expand on three insights of spirituality that have challenged you in the preceding year.
- ë Highlight and discuss areas that you might explore in the future. These might be areas or models of spirituality that attract you, energise you, or possibly challenge you.
- ë How might exploring these new areas or models be of benefit to you in the ongoing development of your spirituality?

This is an ideal opportunity to draw from the personal reflections in your journal. Make sure that you share this with your mentor before submitting your completed piece of work to us.

# Beyond Ourselves

Up to this point you have focused on developing an understanding and greater appreciation of your own personal spirituality. This is essential in helping us to appreciate and accept other people's spirituality. Too often we can fall victim to the mentality that 'what is different' is 'wrong'. We all have a unique relationship with our God, and each person is called to journey with God in a way that is unique and particular to them. You have been presented with a number of different models of spirituality. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but hopefully it can illustrate something of the variety of models or categories. Another example of this can be found in Matthew's gospel in the Beatitudes of chapter 5. We can liken the Beatitudes to models of spirituality too, after all they are about a way of 'Be-ing'.

In this passage Jesus clearly illustrates that different people have different strengths in the way they relate to God. Peace-makers, justice-seekers, the compassionate, humble and gentle are shown here as models of different attitudes of being.

In considering your particular faith community, there are a number of avenues that you might explore.

What are some of the different models of spirituality that are expressed in your faith community?

Are you aware of groups or individuals in the wider community who offer a different model of spirituality to that or those of your immediate faith community?

Perhaps there is a possibility of exploring a different model or number of models of spirituality with your Youth Ministry? Using different approaches in prayer and worship times is one way, but perhaps trying an exercise similar to that Spirituality Koru may be another.

Reflect on the prayer styles that your faith community commonly uses, and critique the model/s of spirituality reflected. Where would it sit on the Spirituality Circle? Are there elements that are absent which might otherwise be tried and explored in your Youth Ministry?

For a final exercise design a prayer time or prayer and discussion session which explores a different model of spirituality with your Youth Ministry. The following page will help with your planning.

# A Journey Into Spirituality

## **STRUCTURE?**

What form will you use? A different style of prayer? e.g. A guided meditation followed by a discussion? Or prayer in the style of Taize? A Praise and Worship time? Or perhaps an exercise in journalling with particular questions to help people focus on their own personal spirituality.

## **VENUE?**

Where would be the ideal space for this? The usual gathering place for your group or would a different venue be preferable? What are the specific things you need your venue to accommodate? e.g. If you are planning to include a meditation, you will require an area large enough for all of your group to be able to lie down and stretch out with ample room around them. Also take into account factors such as how to achieve minimal noise or interruptions.

## **RESOURCES?**

What resources will you be needing? Music, prepared reflections and printed material, equipment, drawing implements and paper, candles, songs, instruments,...? Note also that it is perfectly acceptable to invite a person or group in to lead your group in such an activity, just be sure to run this by your mentor before approaching a particular group or person. e.g. If you would like to have your group experience Taize style prayer but feel you don't know enough to lead this effectively yourself, perhaps there is someone or a group that you can invite in. Alternatively there might be a group or place who meet somewhere that you could take your group to join in with. Be sure to check this out with the group you intend visiting beforehand to explain your hopes and reasons. This will also give you the opportunity to 'vet' them out to see if this will be an ideal and safe learning experience for you and your group.

## **FOLLOW UP?**

What would be an ideal follow-up exercise or format in order to get the most out of such an exercise? An open discussion, forum style, or a question sheet drawing out specific points? Or maybe a journalling exercise after which people share in small groups or pairs? It's all up to you to tailor and design an opportunity to explore an alternative model of spirituality with your group. Have fun!

# Spiritual Direction

You may have heard the terms 'Spiritual Direction' or 'Spiritual Accompaniment' bandied about and wondered what it refers to. On the other hand you might already be seeing someone in this capacity, in this case you won't need to read on! If, however, this is a new concept for you or if you are aware of the term but are curious to know more, read on.

Spiritual Direction refers generally to the process whereby someone (client) chooses to see a particular person (S.D) on a regular basis to talk over where they are at in their life at that given time. It could be likened to the role of your mentor crossed with a spiritual counsellor!

The advantages of seeing a Spiritual Director are several, and here are just a few :

- ! Seeing a S.D helps keep you moving and motivated on your spiritual journey.
- ! Keeps you accountable to yourself and others.
- ! Can free up blockages in your spiritual (and sometimes physical) life.
- ! Helps keep your vision broad and open.
- ! Can be affirming to have someone as a supportive as well as challenging friend.
- ! S.D can also be helpful in suggesting resources that will assist you in your spiritual development.
- ! It can be very enabling and freeing to have someone with whom you can safely be yourself knowing your confidence is kept.

If you feel you might like to explore the possibility of Spiritual Direction you need to consider the following points. Not just anyone can be a S.D, it takes someone with experience and skill to offer this ministry with integrity. There are S.D's around who specialise in this ministry, whom you might like to approach. Then again, you may also know someone from your local faith community who you have a great deal of respect for, whom you believe would be positive in this role. (That is if they're willing!).

In approaching someone, it would be important also to talk through your expectations and hopes with the person you approach. This way both parties are clear as to what is expected and offered.

A Spiritual Director may make suggestions from time to time in the accompaniment process, but their role should not be that of an advice giver or 'agony column' as in the magazines! Their ministry should emphasise the gift of listening as much as anything else. In a sense a S.D operates as a sounding board, offering suggestions when they can see an opportunity for you that maybe you haven't yet discovered.

At all times a S.D is ideally accompanying you in a way that assists you to keep moving towards wholeness in your journey with God. Some people find that seeing a S.D for a certain period of time is enough to get them pointed in a healthy direction for the present time, choosing to return to them when they feel compelled to at a later stage.

Spiritual Direction can be a life-enabling tool and one that I personally recommend highly, but obviously there is no compulsion to have to take it on, particularly if you feel there are people in your life who fulfil this role adequately already!

# Discover Your Spiritual Type:

## A guide to Individual and Congregational Growth

*Extracts from the Alban Institute Publication by Corinne Ware. 1995*

### FOUR SPIRITUAL TYPES



The vertical speculative-affective axis intersects with the horizontal apophatic-kataphatic axis forming quadrants. Within these quadrants, identified by the bordering poles, we find the four spiritual types. Quadrant 1, for instance, is influenced by the two points, speculative thinking and concrete (kataphatic) imaging of God. With the two bordering influences creating a particular spirituality, exactly what can we discover about spiritual type within all the quadrants? I suggest you read the following descriptions of the types now and again after you have taken the Spirituality Wheel Selector test.

At the conclusion of each description of the four spiritual types, I will address concerns of those called to do spiritual direction or who think of themselves as spiritual companions. These comments acknowledge the fact that each type of spirituality needs a different kind of nourishment.

#### **TYPE 1: SPECULATIVE/KATAPHATIC - A HEAD SPIRITUALITY**

This is an intellectual "thinking" spirituality that favors what it can see, touch, and vividly imagine. Such concreteness could be theologically expressed in concepts, such as God as Father and/or Mother; for Christians, the centrality of Christ and the incarnation; for Jews, the Torah. What activities might this group ask for to enhance its spiritual life? Their choices will be based mostly on activity and on corporate gathering: more study groups, better sermons, and some sort of theological renewal within the worshipping community. (As you read further, you will notice that all four types seek renewal, but each seeks a different kind of renewal.) People in this group will support whatever helps them fulfill their vocation in life. The daily life, after all, is the "real world."

I was invited to lead a study for lay members and their pastors from three congregations of the same Christian denomination. After several hours of discussion of Holmes's "circle" concepts as they related to the groups' own printed orders of service and weekly newsletters, they agreed that their corporate worship expression fell predominantly within type 1 spirituality. It centered on gathering and the spoken word. To enrich their experience they needed to emphasize the opposite quadrant, type 3, fostering solitude, introspection, and silence. They planned a retreat, and then, in typical type-1 style, passed around a sign-up sheet, urging everyone to come. I expect the retreat ultimately featured a full program with little silence or solitude. If they did this, they were not "wrong"; they were simply exercising their style of spirituality. At some later time they may choose to risk the unstructured, the solitary, and the silent, but one sees the difficulty in doing what they could not, at that time, imagine.

The contribution of type-1 spirituality to the whole is invaluable. This style produces theological reflection and crafts position papers on ethical issues. It supports education and publication and causes us to examine the texts of our hymns to see if we are singing what we actually believe. Content is primary with this group, as is systematic congruence of thought and belief. While type 2 or 3 "experiences the Holy," it is type 1 that undertakes to make sense of that experience and to name it. They codify and so preserve the faith story from generation to generation; Bibles are read and Torah is studied. It is here that things are done "decently and in order," and we can be grateful for the coherence exerted on us all by the gifts of type 1.

Spiritual directors will discover they have fewer directees or companions from the type-1 group, which is prone to seek guidance chiefly from scripture and sermon—that is, from words. Yet some

do seek spiritual guidance, and their particular needs must be understood in order for them to grow. Reading, journaling, and specific meditation with a definite focus are fruitful beginning activities. Prayer in this quadrant is almost always language or word-based prayer, whether aloud or silent. Theological discussion is usually easy with this type, but it is counterproductive to spiritual growth to allow all sessions to become "head trips." Growth for such people lies in their gradually sensing their interior connection with God. The goal, however, is to stretch experience, not to change style.

Holmes contended that any one of the quadrants could become so exclusively focused on its particular style that excess and aberration could occur, what Allan Sager calls "falling outside the circle." For type 1, Holmes called this excess "rationalism." It is an overintellectualization of one's spiritual life with a consequent loss of feeling, often perceived as dogmatic and *dry*. The director will want to encourage flexibility and increased attention to the feeling and experiential side of spirituality.

### **TYPE 2: AFFECTIVE/KATAPHATIC - A HEART SPIRITUALITY**

Notice that with type 2 we are still viewing God in kataphatic terms, but that we have dropped into the affective or lower half of the circle. This means type 2 is not a head-trip spirituality; it is all heart—combined with the concrete, real-life stuff. Here theology still emphasizes the anthropomorphic representation of God and the centrality of scripture, but this is now combined with a more affective, charismatic spirituality whose aim is to achieve holiness of life. The transformational goal is that of personal renewal.

It is interesting that national demographic figures indicate that the Christian population formerly concentrated in type-1 mainline denominations is now moving to no church membership at all or into congregations that represent type-2 experience. One might conclude that there is a thirst for the affective in our lives, for an emotionally moving experience more in touch with feeling.

"While kataphatics of the mind may charge, 'My doctrine is purer than yours,' kataphatics of the heart counter with, 'My walk with the Lord is closer than yours.' " It is an entirely different vocabulary based on whether one seeks illumination by rational mind or by heartfelt intuition. A type 2 will characteristically emphasize evangelism, since experience must be shared, and on transformation, sometimes of an obvious, even sudden type. Witnessing, testimonials, and especially music mark corporate worship. Theologically this experience stresses the immanence of God over the transcendence of God. God is real in the here and now, and, as the rhythmic gospel chorus says, "Yes, God is real, 'cause I can feel him deep in my soul!"

Type-2 prayer is made with words but the words are used less formal than with type 1, and praying is usually extemporaneous. These people focus on personal service to others but often with the caveat that the service provide opportunity to witness about one's faith. Witness and proclamation are so important to type 2 that they often use mass media, such as television and radio, even creating their own national and worldwide media networks. Their contribution to the whole is the warmth of feeling, energy, and freedom of expression others sometimes lack. African-American churches, especially, have this capacity for spontaneity and ebullient spirituality.

Spiritual direction of the type-2 person may begin with the story of her life told from a spiritual perspective and a relating of these events to the biblical story. Such people may respond well to a loosely structured daily spiritual discipline. They often need permission to acknowledge anger, disappointment, sadness, and doubt, and to allow themselves to be less than ideal. Their spirituality is enriched by being able to see expressions of faith other than their own as having value and making contribution. You might also encourage type 2 directees to risk new experience on their own and to trust God to be with them in their journeys, seeing God as the nurturing rather than the punitive parent.

Holmes calls the excess for this group "pietism." The focus can become too exclusive, resulting in

an "it's us against the world" mentality that does not acknowledge the spiritual experience of others, especially if it differs in any way from a type-2 experience. Spirituality in this quadrant is sometimes disdained for being too emotional and for believing that an affective experience must be duplicated in others if the experience of these others is to count as valid. These people may be viewed as anti-intellectual if their exclusivity results in being closed to the risk of new thought.

### **TYPE 3: AFFECTIVE/APOPHATIC - A MYSTIC SPIRITUALITY**

In type 3 we are still within affective, or feeling, experience, but we move for the first time into apophatic knowing. Here *hearing from* God rather than *speaking to* God is prominent. The aim of this spirituality is union with the Holy, and, although this is never completely achievable, only the continued attempt, or "the journey," satisfies. People attracted to this type of spirituality are often by nature contemplative, introspective, intuitive, and focused on an inner world as real to them as the exterior one. This is most often the home of the mystic.

Instead of a God who possesses characteristics similar to human ones, God is ineffable, unnameable, and more vast than any known category. God's statement to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exod. 3:14), makes perfect sense to a type-3 person and is accurate to his understanding of the Holy. A life of austerity and asceticism is appealing to many in this quadrant—not because they are necessarily self-punishing, but because simplicity of life quiets outside distractions and enables one to attend more fully to the inner voice. People of this spirituality often find themselves uncomfortable and not fitting in, especially within Western Protestantism or within synagogues that are primarily cultural assemblies. They will discover the works of writers such as Anthony de Mello and Thomas Merton and feel that they are like thirsty survivors of the desert who have come upon water. Jewish readers may rediscover the Kabbalah, or enjoy the writings of contemporary writers such as Lawrence Kushner. If they leave organized religion, and frequently they do, they may be attracted to Eastern religions because of the apophatic approach (a former emphasis of Christianity and Judaism that has largely been discarded in Western technological culture). Their agenda is renewal of inner life.

Theologically people on the apophatic side tend to see God as Creative Force and may be attracted to a creation-type theology. Those of a slightly different bent may enjoy reading the work of Alfred North Whitehead, although the appeal of his work is certainly not limited to just one quadrant.

The type-3 contribution to the whole of spiritual experience is enormous. Many in this group write and publish and provide the especially inspirational and uplifting spirituality that fuels our daily lives with a sense of the Holy. Type-3 spirituality provides fodder for much of the intellectual interpretation and theological writing done by type 1. These are the people who push the frontiers of spirituality, enabling us to imagine what we might do if we would be open enough.

To a spiritual director the spiritual needs of a type-3 person are usually evident, and fortunately people from this sector frequently seek spiritual direction. As those from type 2 need permission to be human, those from type 3 need permission to retreat and seek solitude. They may have bought into the American myth that says being alone and doing "nothing" is lazy, antisocial, and unproductive. They may feel guilty and odd as they carefully hide their desire for the nourishment of solitude and silence. Once they have realized who they are and become comfortable with their spirituality, type-3 people are more likely to laugh than any other group. Remember Saint Francis of Assisi? Truly a laughing mystic.

The excess of this quadrant is labeled "quietism," an aberration that leads to exaggerated retreat from reality and from interaction with the world. Quietism tends to spiritual passivity rather than initiative and deprives the world of the treasured gifts of mysticism. The mystic who lacks the balance of the other spiritual expressions is also deprived of the blessing of interaction with others and the lessons provided by friction. Unless it is discerned that they have a true vocation for solitary

prayer, and some do have such a calling, spiritual direction will steer these people to alternating their retreat time with involvement and interaction. Teaching techniques of meditation and contemplation are especially fruitful.

#### **TYPE 4: SPECULATIVE/APOPHATIC - A KINGDOM SPIRITUALITY**

Type 4 is the smallest group. Because there are relatively few examples, it is the most difficult to describe. The mystic, apophatic experience coupled with an intellectual mode of gathering data makes for an active visionary who is single-minded with a deeply focused, almost crusading, type of spirituality. When we try to envision this quadrant, we think less of denominations or faith groups and more of individual people. In fact, people of this spiritual type care less about affiliation with organized religion than do many others, certainly less than those in types 1 and 2. Their aim is simply to obey God and to witness to God's coming reign. Theirs is a courageous and sturdy idealism that takes responsibility for change; they have a passion for transforming society. While type 3 tends toward retreat, the type 4 is inclined to be assertive, even aggressive, in desire to implement a vision of the world as the kingdom of God on earth.

I have no idea what Ralph Nader's spiritual life may be like, but politically he perfectly exemplifies this single-minded dedication of the intellectual visionary. From a faith standpoint, these people frequently sacrifice their personal lives for their hope that the kingdom will be realized on earth; they may even become martyrs to their cause. The Hebrew prophets and the Apostolic Fathers and Mothers come to mind in thinking of type 4 as well as Savonarola, Joan of Arc, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Dorothy Day, Elie Wiesel, and the spirit found in present-day liberation theology. For these people the regeneration of society becomes a personal crusade, fueling a strong desire to rectify the wrongs of the world.

They equate prayer and theology with action. It is not uncommon to hear statements such as, "My work and my prayer are one," or, "I pray with my hands and feet." Their gifts to us are tremendous—found in the freedom marches of the sixties and overseas in the Peace Corps. They lead us in the difficult and embarrassing issues, caring little about how others may judge them. They have their vision of the ideal, and your opinion and mine will hardly matter when placed alongside that vivid driving image.

Spiritual guidance offered to such a person should channel and interpret—not stifle—the evident spiritual energy. Respectfully listen to anger and exasperation with authority figures, being patient and firm in your response. Encourage small-group support and alternative modes of worship if the present style is not affirming. For type 4 the growing edge is the knowledge that God has ultimate control; although they may offer their considerable gifts, they do not need to be "driven" to be faithful. These people need to hear the words of the fourteenth-century English mystic Julian of Norwich: "But all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."

An excessive and unbalanced spirituality in this type is called "enkratism" and refers to a moralistic and unrelenting tunnel-vision. If you are not supporting "the cause" with the same selfless effort that they expend, you are not a part of their world. In her single-mindedness, a type 4 may not notice you. Do you know a person with strong type-4 tendencies? He can trouble our lives, even make us feel guilty, but we find ourselves admiring this person for being willing to make a difference.

#### **THE CIRCLE AS INVITATION TO SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS**

The primary value of this approach to spiritual type is not in being able to pigeonhole oneself or other people or groups, saying, "I *am* this category or type." Such an application undermines the core of Holmes's meaning by suggesting limitation rather than latitude. Rather, the typology shows that we all have tendencies toward certain ways of living out our spirituality and that our growing edge is the tension placed on us by "the other." Of necessity, the above descriptions of four types

are overdrawn. We could safely guess that almost no one falls entirely into one quadrant or type of spiritual expression without any shade or inclination toward at least one other type.

The message of Holmes's circle is this: Once we have found where we fall within the total circle, we then have opportunity to grow by

- (1) acknowledging and strengthening our present gifts,
- (2) growing toward our opposite quadrant, and
- (3) appreciating more perceptively the quadrants on either side of our dominant type

Worshipping groups will want to plan to meet the needs of more people by stretching toward some variety of expression without losing the central identity of the group. People who find their spirituality represented in several quadrants may be encouraged to see that they are capable of several kinds of worship experience.

From several constructs and typologies that provide ways of seeing spirituality, I have chosen to explore this particular schema because

- (1) it offers a template by which basic spiritual types can be affirmed, while it provides
- (2) spiritual tension from alternate styles encouraging a path toward wholeness.

Presentations of spirituality are often hierarchical, with one expression viewed as being higher or better than another. We get competitive about that sort of ranking and defeat our own best interest by forcing on ourselves things we do not really feel. In Holmes's schema of spirituality, each category is of value, yet all are different.

I encourage you to work with these ideas. They will foster growth through the individuation of your personal spirituality and enrich you as you integrate into your life the experience of others. Using this typology, we each come to know more truly our own gifts and to see their value to incorporate spiritual life. The Spirituality Wheel Selector test is designed to affirm gifts and to reveal differences, not to evaluate the maturity or worth of any particular spiritual style.

We have discussed the importance of integrating all the types of spirituality to make for a balanced whole. We have also discussed the equal importance of becoming individuated, of recognizing our own individual spiritual type as indicated by the combinations that create the four spirituality types. We are now ready to use the Spirituality Wheel with some deeper understanding, appreciating the meaning of its results to our own experience.

Here are only a very few suggestions as to how a congregation can enrich its worship expression to include more of its members. If we have learned anything from the study so far, it is that we should not expect all members to participate in all activities. Participation in activities is not a test of faith. The contemplative mystic who prays in her closet but does not attend potlucks is busy and equally faithful.

To read the following, think in terms of this statement: "If I wanted to strengthen a particular type of spirituality, I might try ..."

**Type 1. To strengthen the speculative-kataphatic:**

1. Form study and discussion groups around the interests of members, using books, periodicals, tapes. Explore new publishing houses and authors. You can always choose to reject an undesirable idea.
2. Create a library for group use.
3. Begin a Bible-study group that will use concordances, Bible dictionaries, various scripture translations, and study helps.
4. Read chapter 8, "*Lectio Divina*," and study on your own or as a group. Actually, this is an ideal activity for all four types.

5. Inform yourself by visiting other worship services. Invite guest speakers from various groups. Your goal is appreciation, not agreement.

### **Type 2. To strengthen the affective-kataphatic:**

1. Experiment with musical expression. Have an informal service using only praise music and instruments other than the organ. You might schedule this on a weekday.
2. Arrange a time for people briefly to tell their faith stories to the group—how they were introduced to their faith, how it has affected their life, and how it has influenced recent events.
3. Occasionally leave the pulpit or lectern to deliver the sermon; speak at floor level, near the people.
4. "Dinner on the ground"—picnicking—is part of the American evangelical heritage, but anyone can do it. There is something warm and "type 2" about food and eating together outdoors.
5. If members often retreat to the lake or the mountains over the weekend, consider a casual Sunday evening service where T-shirts, sports gear, and tennis shoes are expected. You will attract an odd crew, but these services can be very peaceful and deeply moving.

### **Type 3. To strengthen the affective-apophatic:**

1. Consider ways to include silence in the worship service. We are not trained to enjoy "no noise." For type 3, the yearning for it is often like a thirst. Just a little will help.
2. Form a group that gathers together and prays silently at a particular time for the worship service. Some type-3 people are so private they will not do this. That's fine. Ask them to pray privately for the service.
3. If you design a retreat for type-1 or type-2 members, you will want to plan group activities, a speaker, and program. For type 3, this only interferes. Consider providing a "director" to lead in meditation, read some short but powerful quotations, and direct periods of silence. Quiet, tonal music is an asset, as are crafts, reading, journaling, and walking in the woods.
4. Invite a leader to discuss with type 3 various ways to structure short prayers and meditations into a daily work life. This used to be called a "rule," and it is an effective and disciplined way to live.
5. For a variation on the daily rule, institute a corporate noontime prayer. Ask any who are interested to pray a silent, extemporaneous prayer or one chosen by the group. This is particularly significant to the group if all are joined in doing this at the same moment.
6. During a worship service, ask the congregation to read from the Psalms antiphonally. (Have two groups alternate in reading subsequent phrases or verses). The rhythmic quality to such reading nourishes the meditative temperament.

### **Type 4. To strengthen the speculative-apophatic:**

While type 3 is a *being* person with vision, type 4 is a *doing* visionary. You may find few in your congregation who are dominant in this category. You may find more for whom this is a tendency but not predominant. Some have left the organized church for what they regard as ministry. The key type-4 words are a *cause*, a *mission*, and a meaningful *project*. All members, not only type 4, will grow from engaging in an effort that has human significance.

1. Habitat for Humanity has the flavor of a significant cause. So do other programs that provide food, work in the field of ecology, and fight for moral issues within the political process. Inasmuch as your congregation will take a stand on these matters, you will keep, even attract, a type-4 spirituality.
2. For some congregations, the Stephen Ministries lay training program is a good avenue for

significant service

3. Less dramatic, but also effective, are local efforts to provide services to the elderly, the housebound, and day care for children. Some might enjoy work with what is often called the "building and grounds" committee. When the floods of 1993 wiped out the town of Elwood, Missouri, local congregations joined together with a group from Texas; they cleaned out the water and mud from the homes of several elderly residents who had been stranded. This is the sort of significant action that appeals to people who like to say, "My work is my prayer."

Of course there are dozens of other things that can be adapted to enrich your worship community. Take your time. Consider your options. Change bothers people. It also "grows" them.

## Possible Resources

The following books are recommended resources. Your understanding of spirituality will be enhanced if you can find the time to read some of these. If you have difficulty in locating any of these resources, ask your mentor if they can recommend a book on prayer and/or spirituality.

"Praying in Secret" by Lyn & Hedley Beare, Epworth,

Publications of the Joint Board of Christian Education (JBCE), 1988.

"God of Surprises" by Gerard Hughes Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd: London; 1985

"Touching the Holy: Ordinariness, Self-Esteem, & Friendship" by Robert Wicks. Ave Maria Press: Notre Dame, Indiana; 1992.

"Care of the Soul: A Guide for cultivating Depth and Sacredness in everyday life" by Thomas Moore. Harper Collins Publishers: New York; 1994.

"Encounters with Jesus: 18 Scripture Meditations for Groups", (Ed) Craig Mitchell, JBCE, 1992.

"Aotearoa Psalms", Joy Cowley, Catholic Supplies.

"Reaching for rainbows: resources for creative worship", Ann Weems, Westminster Press.

"Dreams alive: prayers by teenagers", (Ed) Carl Koch, St Mary's Press.

"Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship", R Duck & M Tiabassi (eds), The Pilgrim Press.