

IPF Spiritual Direction Training Program

“Noticing God at Work in Priestly Life”

Introduction

The Lord encounters us, not only in our personal prayer, but also in the midst of priestly activity. We want to maintain a contemplative discerning awareness of God’s presence and action in the midst of priestly ministry. The emphasis on relationship—identity—mission that we have discussed since the beginning of this program reminds us that we know who we are (identity) based on our felt experience of God’s personal love for us (relationship). What we do flows out of the truth of who we are in communion with the Lord (mission). Even more clearly as priests, what we do is not our own work, but we serve in communion with Christ. Our ministry as priests is an experience of being with Christ and growing in deeper relationship with him amid the varied circumstances of pastoral care. Rooted in relationship with the Lord, which is the most important part of our lives, we want to pay attention to the movements that sustain and deepen that relationship, while rejecting those movements that would interfere with our communion with Christ. Throughout the day, different movements arise in us, and we choose which ones we cooperate with and which we dismiss. Therefore, the application of the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits is a vital spiritual activity that helps us to “stay with” the Lord not only in prayer but also in all the work that we do as priests, so that we might truly experience unceasing union with Jesus Christ. This simple reflection exercise helps to develop the spiritual awareness of God in the midst of priestly ministry.

Name:

3. What did you notice God doing in the heart of the person (if you can say)?

4. How were you interiorly affected by your visit with the person?

5. What was the experience of God's presence laboring to love you?

Additional Comments:

Pastoral Situation: Spiritual Direction/Spiritual Conversation

1. Describe the key facts of the situation.

2. Name the principal movements you noticed in the person during your conversation.

3. What did you notice God doing in the heart of the person (if you can say)?

4. Was the person moving away from God or toward God? If the latter, was the person in spiritual consolation or spiritual desolation? What evidence shows this?

5. What were you thinking and feeling?

6. What was the experience of God's presence laboring to love you?

Additional Comments:

Pastoral Situation: Counseling (marriage, crisis, parental, etc.)

1. Describe the key facts of the situation.

2. Name three things that you heard.

3. What did you notice God doing in the heart of the person(s) (if you can say)?

4. How were you interiorly affected by your visit with the person?

5. What was the experience of God's presence laboring to love you?

Additional Comments:

Pastoral Situation: Preaching

1. Describe the preaching situation (texts, circumstances, etc.).

2. Homily preparation:

What was your experience of God leading you in your preparation?

3. The experience of preaching itself:

a. What were you thinking and feeling while preaching?

b. What was the experience of God laboring to love you as a diocesan priest
-preacher?

Additional Comments: