

The Friend of the Bridegroom

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NOVIATE & NOVICESHIP

- “In St. Teresa of Avila’s day spiritual direction was one of obedience. Although authority and obedience is still valued, the new perception of a spiritual director is that of a facilitator, co-discerner, and interpreter.
- Fr. Green sees the directors role as facilitative rather than directive.
- He sights Fr. George Aschenbrenner contrasting two approaches to formation:
 1. NOVIATE: the building, external structures, which before gave direction, order and unity to the formation program, conformity to the external imposed structures; novice obeys and does not challenge authority Past methods that Greene does not feel are effective in today’s world.
 2. NOVICESHIP: mean process; invitation not command; confront own real motivations

How do you see these two approaches manifested in Spiritual guidance? Why do you think Fr. Greene would think that the NOVIATE approach – external structures - would not be effective in today’s world? Do you agree?

BLIND GUIDES: Very important chapter

1. **Devil:** to beginners he will urge them to abandon meditative prayer before they have a foundation, for mature pray-er, he will urge them to cling to familiar meditation even when the Lord is drawing them from it.
2. **Self:** fights against relinquishing her own understanding when she should surrender completely into Gods arms.
3. **Spiritual Director (the worst Blind Guide!)**

Traits of:

Blind Director	Good Director
▪ Lacking in personal experience	▪ Knows that God leads each soul along different paths
▪ insensitivity	▪ Lives in awe of the mystery of God and His unique design for each human being
▪ Possessiveness	▪ Doesn’t judge the whole “elephant” from the one small part they have touched.

Once a solid foundation is laid (considerable information about Jesus, about scripture, about the basic ways of prayer – as well as self-knowledge and self-confrontation), there are the two times in one's life that Spiritual Direction is most valuable:

1. The primary need will be to clarify and discern the pray-ers own experience of the Lord and
2. When we move into the strange and mysterious world of the dry well or the dark night.

Do you experience difficulty in “taking the me” out when giving Spiritual Direction? Why is it critical to do so?

TRAITS of a GOOD SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

The title “The friend of the bridegroom came from the central insight St. John the Baptist, who describe himself thus (Jn 3:29), is the ideal model for a good spiritual director. His joyful acceptance of the subordinate role he played in the drama of the Messiah's coming should guide the director in his or her joyful acceptance of a similar role today.” Thomas Greene

Below are the 6 criteria (traits) in choosing (being) a Spiritual Director (Chapter 3)

- Compatibility: of personalities
- Shared Vision: of the goal of Spiritual Direction -the road to be travelled
- Objectivity: healthy detachment- Adult/Adult – focused on strengths
- Good Listener: essential if going to be a co-discerner, not so much of “me” in the interaction, listen to the feelings
- Confidentiality: “Crucial”, “Sacredness”
- Sixth Sense (Ahead on the Road): the importance of your understanding of your own personal spiritual journey.

1. ***Discuss briefly the importance of each trait in building “connectedness” with your directee. What area (s) requires more effort on my part.***
2. ***How could the above criteria be used to assess “fit” between directee and director?***

2 ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF Spiritual Direction

1. **Adult/adult:** “relationship between the spiritual director and the one being directed is not a parent-child relationship, but an ADULT/ADULT relationship”. (pg 44)

How does this differentiate from the Parent/Child relationship?

What difficulties arise when this is the relationship manifested in guidance?

2. **Focus on Strength's:** (not weaknesses)

Suggest ways that we, as director's, can help the directee to come to realize that her "real strength is the Lord's love for her and her love for the Lord"

NOTE: (What are two ways that a Spiritual Director can facilitate an ADULT/ADULT relationship with the directee?)

FUNDEMENTAL CHALLENGE

The fundamental challenge facing the directee, however, is to free the directee to encounter God in his/her experience” (pg 91)

“Set my people free.” The Lord says. “Free from themselves and their fears and attachments. Free from you, the director. FREE FROM ALL THAT IS NOT GOD. Set them free to journey into the darkness that is light – free to find Me, their LOVE.” That, in essence, is John of the Cross’s classic teaching on spiritual direction. (pg 89)

Discuss how the following quote influences how you see Spiritual Direction going forward. What 2-3 resolutions, insights or clarifications, from reading this book, helped “set you free” as you to move forward in your own spiritual journey and your role as a spiritual director.