



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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Part 20: Helps for discernment: spiritual direction

Talking to a trusted person – a spiritual director – about our relationship with God is helpful when you are trying to learn if God is calling you to be a single person or married, a religious or a priest.

It is helpful to talk to a spiritual director about our relationship with God because it's easy to be deceived by our own thinking and emotions, especially when it comes to the things of God; best to bounce those issues off of a trusted person.

Also, there is always more to learn about God than one person can claim, so it is prudent to consult others as well; as they say, two heads are better than one.

And if we are asking if God is calling me to a state of life, like priesthood in the Archdiocese of Dubuque, we need help in knowing ourselves, God, and the particulars of that state of life.

So, what do we do to get a spiritual director? Here are some hints:

- Pray to God the Holy Spirit to guide you in your choice of a spiritual director.
- Ask someone you trust to give you advice about who to choose.
- Some people choose a priest, maybe your parish priest, for spiritual direction, because they can make use of the same priest to go to Confession.
- That being said, a spiritual director doesn't have to be someone ordained or in a religious order.
- Look for someone who knows about God, the Bible, and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Look for someone who knows God, that is, who prays regularly, and who worships at Holy Mass on Sunday and other Holy Days of Obligation.
- Look for someone who is an intentional follower of Jesus and who is active in his/her parish.

- Look for someone that you can talk to without nervousness, and who will hold what you say in strict confidence.
- Test out a potential spiritual director by asking him/her for advice on spiritual questions; look to see if he/she is orthodox, kind, patient, and helpful.
- It is best to talk face-to-face to a spiritual director, but if circumstances make that difficult, you can receive spiritual direction from the Sunday homily, good spiritual books (like To Save a Thousand Souls), or from reputable Catholic bloggers (like Father Mike Schmitz).

Don't be afraid to ask someone to help you know if God is calling you to be a single person or married, a religious or a priest in the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

Michael Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque