



## ART & PRACTICE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

### Program Dates And Fees Frequently Asked Questions

#### Art & Practice Format and Sessions

This year, with the 2016/17 program schedule, we are initiating a new structure for our meetings. Responding to the realities of resources here at Mercy Center, and with the desire to “go slowly and lovingly” in a more contemplative manner with the program, all sessions will be held over 4 weekend residential intensives – beginning in August 2016 and ending in April 2017.

#### Year One: 2016-17

- **Session One** Thursday August 25 - Saturday, August 27
- **Session Two** Thursday November 3 – Saturday, November 5
- **Session Three** Thursday February 2 - Saturday February 4
- **Session Four** Thursday April 20 - Saturday April 22

#### Year Two: 2017-18

- **Session One** Thursday, August 24 – Saturday, August 26, 2017
- **Session Two** Thursday, November 2 – Saturday, November 4, 2017
- **Session Three** Thursday, February 1 – Saturday, February 3, 2018
- **Session Four** Thursday, April 19 – Saturday, April 21, 2108

Check in time 3:00 pm on Thursdays. Program begins at 4:00 pm Thursday and ends at 3:00 pm on Saturday. Meals and lodging included in your fees.

#### Cost of the 2016/17 program sessions

The fee for 2016/17 session – 4 weekend intensives – including overnight stays and meals = \$2,500

#### Additional costs

- Nonrefundable program application fee (\$50)
- Your personal supervision ( 9 per year at \$50 per session)
- Books and materials– can be purchased through Mercy Center or Amazon (about \$175/year)
- Travel and incidentals and any additional nights need to stay at Mercy Center.
- Registration and fees (\$75) for Don Bisson’s January 7, 2017 conference (required)

#### Cost of the 2017/18 program sessions

The fee for 2017/18 session – 4 weekend intensives – including overnight stays and meals = \$2,600

#### Additional costs

- Your personal supervision ( 9 per year at \$50 per session)
- Books and materials– can be purchased through Mercy Center or Amazon (about \$175/year)
- Travel and incidentals and any additional nights need to stay at Mercy Center.
- Registration and fees (\$75) for Don Bisson’s January 6, 2018 conference (required)



## **Art and Practice FAQ**

### **I completed Sacred Journey. Will I automatically be accepted to Art & Practice Year 1?**

Sacred Journey is one requirement for application to the spiritual direction program for most people who do not have an extensive ministry or theological background. We consider all elements of each individual's application package, including completion of Sacred Journey, as well as other preparation and evidence of call to the ministry, personal interviews and mentor assessments.

Completion of Sacred Journey by itself does not guarantee acceptance to Art and Practice, but assures us that you have had focused reflective learning as well as contemplative listening experience that can prepare many people to discern their life vocation - whether or not it is related to the ministry of spiritual direction.

### **I am not a Christian or Catholic, may I still apply?**

Of course! We have welcomed people of a variety of denominations and faith traditions for over 30 years. While our program is based in the Judeo-Christian tradition, we welcome people of all faiths who can honor our approach and use the formation to support their specific spiritual practice.

Our Mercy charism of hospitality means loving respect and welcome for all.

### **Who should do my recommendation form?**

We suggest that you ask a mentor, ministry, or work colleague or current or past spiritual director to fill this out for you. It needs to be someone who knows you very well.

### **How many applicants will be accepted to the program in 2016?**

We have found that a group of about 28 people is the right size for our experiential formation program to support our ratio of mentor staff to participants and to maintain the contemplative spirit of the group.

### **Are payment plans available?**

Payments can be made twice in the program year – ½ in August and the second payment in February. We appreciate your cooperation in meeting these deadlines.

### **Must I stay overnight at Mercy Center for the intensive sessions?**

Yes – over the years, we have found the benefit to forming a contemplative learning community in the beautiful space of our retreat setting. It enhances prayer and promotes the silence and space needed to support the learning and practice of the program.

**Are there assignments or other work between the weekend sessions?** Yes – you will be assigned reading, reflection papers, mentor work, and also doing your own spiritual direction with others just a few months after beginning the program. You will also be seeing an individual supervisor and doing verbatims and reflective work related to the supervision process. In addition to your reading, reflection, mentor work, spiritual direction session, and supervision, each participant is required to attend the Don Bisson workshop held at Mercy Center in January 7, 2017.



### **Once I am accepted to the program, what else will I be required to do?**

- Continue to be open to the process of prayerful discernment with staff and others about your call to the ministry – it is ongoing
- Continue in monthly spiritual direction
- Be in supervision with a Mercy Center approved supervisor
- Attend all sessions and complete all assignments by deadlines

### **What are the topics covered in the Art and Practice program?**

Mercy Center integrates our long experience in formation of spiritual directors, presenting a contemplative program that is focused on interior growth and discernment. While we continue to refine the new format with our intensives, know that most and more of these topics will be included in our learning structure.

Contemplative Attitude/Graced History

Contemplative Attitude toward our growing edges

Directing Another in Prayer

Director's Psychological and Spiritual Growth

Human Experience/Religious Experience

Interior Movements

Theological Presuppositions

Directing Another in Discernment

Addictions and Spiritual Direction

Generation and Culture in Direction

Integrating Spirituality and Social Structure

Sexuality and Spiritual Direction

Marginalization and Spiritual Direction

Initial Spiritual Direction Session

Finding directees for the practicum component

Supervision and its gifts

Discernment of call

Professional considerations and ethics of the ministry of spiritual direction

### **Who is on the Art and Practice team?**

Core team will include Maggie Arbino, Suzanne Buckley, William Dohar, and Liz Lawhead. Presenters and mentors will include other very experienced Mercy Center adjunct staff and experts in spiritual direction.



**Why did Mercy Center change the format of the program to intensives rather than monthly meetings?**

The spiritual life is about listening deeply to reality and responding in a loving and practical way. The signs of the times have shown us that we need to be even more mindful of the impact of our overly busy culture. We are inviting our participants to enter even more deeply into the formation process by this time commitment and slowing down the pace a bit.

We are also at a point in our ministry where we need to pay even closer attention to our future sustainability. Mercy Center, like all organizations, faces resource limitations. This schedule is a much better use of our retreat space, staffing, and appropriate supporting technology, and allows us to continue to present this very important program in an era of limited resources.

**Are there any scholarships/financial aid available?**

There is very limited financial aid for this program, some scholarship grants are available each year. Separate application process after acceptance to the program.

Please read and review all of this information carefully. These are the most common questions related to our program. We are always happy to help you if you need more information.