

## ***REFLECTION ON CRITERIA FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR'S FORMATION***

### ***Sacred is the Call... Awesome indeed the entrustment Tending the Holy, Tending the Holy***



These words of Sister Suzanne Toolan, RSM—an anthem for the ministry of spiritual direction—echo the refrain in our souls as we pay attention to the nudging of the Spirit, responding to the work of God in us.

Are you called to the ministry of spiritual accompaniment? Do others seek you out to listen to their lives and their spiritual journeys?

For over 30 years, Mercy Center Burlingame has provided formation programs for people from all around the world, who are paying attention to that call, and desire authentic preparation and deepening for this ministry.

In our experience, we have found that those who have a gift or charism for the ministry of spiritual direction, and are discerning this call by participation in our formation programs meet MOST of these qualities:

An ongoing prayer life that is contemplative and consistent—and the fruit of that practice is the interior movement to being present to others.

Affirmation and evidence of this movement in the accompaniment of others on their spiritual journeys, either in informal or formal settings.

Commitment to consistent spiritual direction over a period of 2 years or more with a spiritual director who has been formed in contemplative practices and is focused on listening for the experience of God in the lives of others.

Humility and openness to constructive comments, and respect for the knowledge and wisdom of mentors, and a welcoming attitude to going deeper in the interior journey, no matter how challenging. A sense of humor is also important!

Psychological and spiritual maturity and integration, including the ability to fully reflect on one's own growing edges and embrace the growth needed to be fully present to others. Openness to find other support like therapy or counseling if needed.

Theological preparation evidenced by pastoral studies, field ministry work, graduate level courses in Christian Spirituality, or education in other spiritual traditions.

Experience and comfort with silence and solitude through directed retreats, Ignatian Exercises, Centering Prayer, meditation or other programs that support a contemplative stance toward life.

Ability to put the formation program in the center of their personal schedules, making decisions to opt for integration of sessions and processes as key to their own life journey for the next two years.

Open to radical personal transformation, accepting the outcome that many who complete spiritual direction formation programs do not go on to establish individual ministries. Many people integrate their growth and learnings in their current vocations, or deepen their own relationships with God, Self and others in surprising ways.

If you are ready to accept the challenges and realities of our formation programs, we invite you to review the application process. We look forward to the journey with you!