



## **Spiritual Companionship Program**

Each session begins with an experience of a contemplative prayer practice. This component also assists participants in deeper growth in the contemplative spirit. Contemplation is about waking up and growing in awareness of all the dimensions within ordinary life and experience. For most people today, distraction and busyness is the norm of life. The sense of God, a personal relationship with God that penetrates all activity, may be their deepest desire. How to remain connected to and grounded in one's deepest desire and center is the challenge. It is intended that both the prayer practice and general session topics help deepen the interiority of the individual and enrich the individual's call to Christian ministry. Each session, therefore, is intended to provide for integration of contemplation and action. Unless one is called to the institutional monastic lifestyle, action is what we are about...but action integrated with the monastic/contemplative realities. Grace is the life force that moves us, in the power of the Spirit, toward action on behalf of neighbors and strangers. This is what it means to be an active contemplative and is the heart and soul of the Companionship Program. Each session ends with a "spiritual friends" conversation in dyads. This allows for ongoing practice of prayerful listening and responding through integration of the evening's learning.

### **Spiritual Companionship**

The program includes a peer group experience. This provides an opportunity to put theory into practice by experiencing contemplative presence to one another around the sharing of a ministry or personal situation for insight, feedback, and shared wisdom.

Spiritual companions are *not* trained spiritual directors. Spiritual Companions listen to one another and affirm one another's experience in daily life. Neither lays claim in any given moment to greater knowledge or wisdom than the other (even though one might have it). They pray together and share faith.

The call to spiritual companionship arises out of one's baptismal/faith commitment. The Spiritual Companionship Program provides enrichment, spiritual growth, and deepening in contemplative prayer and presence to God, self and neighbor. The Spiritual Companionship Program assists individuals in becoming contemplative ministers of peace and nonviolence. This pastoral program is practical for persons in all walks of life: pastoral ministry, church leadership, health care, education, as well as those who simply desire to grow and deepen in their ability to companion others on the journey. One need not be in professional ministry to participate.

Spiritual Companionship is a two year practicum. The elements of the practicum are: contemplative prayer, presentations with dialog and process, peer growth groups as described above, spiritual friends conversations, readings, and reflection papers – all to facilitate a deepening of the inner spiritual life and ongoing discernment. Participants are encouraged to follow the personal call/invitation of the Holy Spirit to action and service on behalf of the common good as spiritual companions and in whatever ways the call unfolds in prayer and discernment.

### Program Objectives:

- To learn the art of contemplative presence to others
- To explore systems theory and its effects on individuals and communities within a spiritual context
- To foster adult spirituality by deepening a person's knowledge of self and relationship with God in order to integrate contemplation and action
- To expand one's personal worldview to encompass social and cosmic realities
- To discover the interconnection of contemplation, and Spiritual Companionship as it leads to both personal and social transformation
- To encourage reflection on experience through peer group participation
- To provide tools for ongoing individual and group discernment

### Participant Requirements:

- Completion of Foundations in Spirituality (exceptions may be made if there is sufficient foundation in the study of Christian spirituality)
- Commitment to regular prayer practice and reflection on being a spiritual companion to others
- Willingness to participate in all aspects of the program including written papers and Peer Group Presentations, required readings and preparation for each session
- Participation in personal companionship, individual or group spiritual direction during the program
- Attendance at all sessions
- Annual silent directed retreat

### Spiritual Companionship Program Schedule:

The Spiritual Companionship Program focuses on the development of the whole person in responding more deeply to God's call to grow in holiness and openness to healthy human interaction and interdependence. Participants pray, study, and learn together. They share with one another experiences they have had in conversation with others on the journey and receive feedback, wisdom, and encouragement from others in a confidential peer group setting. This experientially based model of formation/education makes use of:

- Assigned readings
- Brief reflection papers
- Peer Group ministry reflection
- Systems thinking
- Contemplative prayer practice
- Resource persons

Required reading lists and bibliography are made available upon acceptance into the program.

**This practicum consists of a two year program of twelve sessions each year. Years 1 and 2 do not have to be taken in sequence; yet participating in both years is strongly recommended.**

### Program Fees:

**Books:** Approximately \$100.00 – may be purchased through DCM Bookstore

**Tuition:** \$575.00

**Deposit:** (\$50.00) and registration

**First time participation in Spiritual Companionship Program:**

**with application materials Parts A and B and 2 Recommendations.**

**Continuing Participants simply register with a deposit.**