

ART OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT
REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS
MONTH 9: INTEGRATION



A. CELTIC PERSPECTIVES “The Final Threshold” CD, Mary Groves

1. A pilgrimage can be a threshold time that offers far more than travel to a physical location. For the Celts, pilgrimages were also an opportunity to consider the next chapter in life’s journey.

Sacred Questions: *Identify a time when your travels opened unimagined doors for you? Is there someplace on your personal ‘bucket list’ that has been calling to you? Why?*

2. “The dying are our teachers”... by offering perspectives into our own living and dying... and, ‘A beautiful death is one of life’s greatest gifts and privileges...”

Sacred Questions: *Reflect on the death of someone which impacted you in a profound way. Without judgment, revisit the experience and see if there is a gift/perspective worth revisiting.*

3. The Celts were not afraid to dialogue with their own death as a way of preparing for life’s most important transition.

Sacred Questions: *Create a space for a ‘journal dialogue’ with your own personal death as a way of tapping deeply into what is important and still unfinished in your own life.*

B. FOUNDATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTION Care of Mind..., May, c. 9, ‘Integration’

1. “I have tried [in this book] to keep clear the distinctions between spiritual and psychological guidance. Like it or not, Western culture is overly bound up in such distinctions... that separate body, mind and spirit... the only reasonable remedy is to stop making these distinctions.” p.199
 - *How/do you wrestle with May’s challenge to avoid such distinctions in your experience of the spiritual direction dynamic?*
 - *How do you assist another in paying less attention to ego-driven agendas and pay more attention to the power of presence?*
2. “Through a contemplative attitude of both director and directee... persons in the spiritual direction process become willing to let problems go unsolved, questions unanswered and even pain uneased... for the sake of a deeper communion.” p.200
 - *How/have you experienced May’s reflection?*
 - *Although no relationship is so perfectly pure [as described above], how/have you experienced the ‘difference’ between spiritual direction and other kinds of relationship including counseling, psychotherapy and other mentor relationships?*
3. “Virtually nothing in our health care systems and institutions honors real spiritual attention... discernment of spirit finds no place in our traditional treatment plans...”

prayer/meditation is considered a luxury or even a distraction and a contemplative attitude would be misunderstood by peer review boards or even in violation of standards of practice.” p. 201-02

- *May names the problem but also warns not to just “blame the system.” As individuals we also are confused about what it means to care for someone... reflect on the model of what it would look like to create professions out of our heart’s deepest desires rather than needing to ‘fix’ another.*
- *How might ‘secular’ professions begin to turn the tide against ignoring spirituality in consultations thereby missing the center of the person who hope to serve?*

C. DISCERNMENT-IN-PRACTICE “Creative Non Action” CD, Jack Kennedy

1. “When we acknowledge that we already have a link to the Infinite [the sacred], our attitudes and actions inevitably change.” Jack quotes Richard Groves/Carl Jung as a foundation for what it means to live in greater awareness of the sacred in your life.
 - *How/when do you experience the sacred link that is referred to here?*
 - *How might you support another in discovering/deepening this link?*
2. We are so conditioned in our society to do something about the suffering of another that we miss what occurs when people are allowed to hold it and find the sacred in it..
 - *What supports you to discover the sacred in life’s challenging circumstances?*
 - *What does the term, ‘create a breathing space’ for another say to you?*
3. Spiritual Direction is ultimately a place where one can be free of the need to change the outcomes and let go of judgments about how things are supposed to look..
 - *What supports you in finding the sacred in the ‘stuff’ of everyday living?*
 - *How does the term ‘creative non action’ speak to you?*

