

Welcome to this course on Spirituality. Over the next twelve weeks we will work through the following learning modules, one per week. Throughout this course there will be reading, journaling and shared dialog forums. The topics covered include:

- Module 1 The Rite of Ordination as a Roadmap
- Module 2 Spirituality as experiencing God's Love and Sharing God's Love
- Module 3 Conversing with God as a Friend
- Module 4 Lectio Divina: Letting Scripture Embrace Our Hearts
- Module 5 Letting the Liturgy of the Hours form our Hearts
- Module 6 The Jesus Prayer – A Way of Continuous Prayer
- Module 7 How to Process Spiritual and Mystical Experiences
- Module 8 Imagination and Meditation – A Catholic Tradition
- Module 9 Inner Cleansing
- Module 10 How God can Change us over a Lifetime
- Module 11 The Gift of Tears – A classic Catholic Spiritual gift
- Module 12 Becoming Channels of God's Healing: the Challenge of Diakonia

The following books will be used throughout the course.

Keating, J. (2006). *The deacon reader*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
ISBN: 0-8091-4389-5

Cummings, O. F. (2004). *Deacons and the Church*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
ISBN: 0-8091-4242-2
ISBN: 1-5876-8039-4

Step-by-Step, Spirituality for Deacons by Deacon Eddie Ensley, PhD

- **Paperback:** 60 pages
- **Publisher:** Abbey Press (April 1, 2014)
- **Language:** English
- **ISBN-10:** 0870295624
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0870295621

Everyday Mysticism by Deacon Eddie Ensley PhD

- **Paperback:** 144 pages
- **Publisher:** Twenty-Third Publications (January 16, 2012)
- **Language:** English
- **ISBN-10:** 1585958433
- **ISBN-13:** 978-1585958436

Online Forums

The key to effective learning, especially distance learning, is interactivity among the facilitators and the learners.

This interactivity takes two forms: technical (we'll look after that!) and intellectual – and that's where you come in. At the end of most modules, we'll pose a question or two and ask that you reply thoughtfully (about 50-100 words ought to do it) to the question itself. (Remember –

these are public writings...if you have concerns which are best addressed in private, write these in your journal, or call or send me a message directly).

After others have posted their replies, respond thoughtfully to at least one classmate's posting.

Finally, after some one has responded to your main posting, answer them so that some dialog occurs among those in the class. How long is long enough? How many posts are enough to maintain dialog? It's all up to you, but know that, in a class of fourteen students last semester, we had well over one thousand posts by the time the class ended!

Remember...dialog, dialog dialog! Go for it. Deacon Eddie Ensley

Spiritual Journals

What is a Journal?

“Mary Warren, writing in the Forward Movement Publications pamphlet, *How to Keep a Spiritual Journal*, first makes the point that a journal is not a diary. A diary is all about "what;" a journal is all about "so what?" and "what now?" (Haywood, M. A., 2003)

Why Journal?

Journal writing has been recognized by spiritual directors as an effective strategy to promote reflective thinking and learning. It is a process of making connections between our experiences and our faith to make visible hidden meaning and internalize our awareness of our spiritual journey.

Tangibles From Journals

Journals create an opportunity to:

- See patterns and recurring themes in our spiritual awareness.
- Record connections made between life and faith. “If you come to know yourself better and see what feeds or starves your spirit when you review your journal entries over a period of time, then you have gained self-knowledge that might have escaped you without the journal.” (Haywood, 2003)
- Captures meanings behind moments, not just our “eureka” moments.
- Take time to reflect.

Elements to Include in Your Spiritual Journal

Based upon the learning topic of each module, you will record and focus on a different element of your spiritual journal. The elements include, but are not limited to the impact that each practice has on your spiritual journey:

- Readings
- Prayer
- Celebration of liturgy

Reflection on Reflection

Your journal is a spiritual mirror that provides the opportunity to see your spiritual journey when you read and pray with what you have written. Your willingness to record your thoughts about what you have written, after the fact, allows for insights and additional layers of meaning.

Grading

Grading journals are not based on magnitude of information but rather on engagement with activities and appropriate reflection. There are not “right” answers to these questions, only opportunities to think, feel, reflect, and record.